

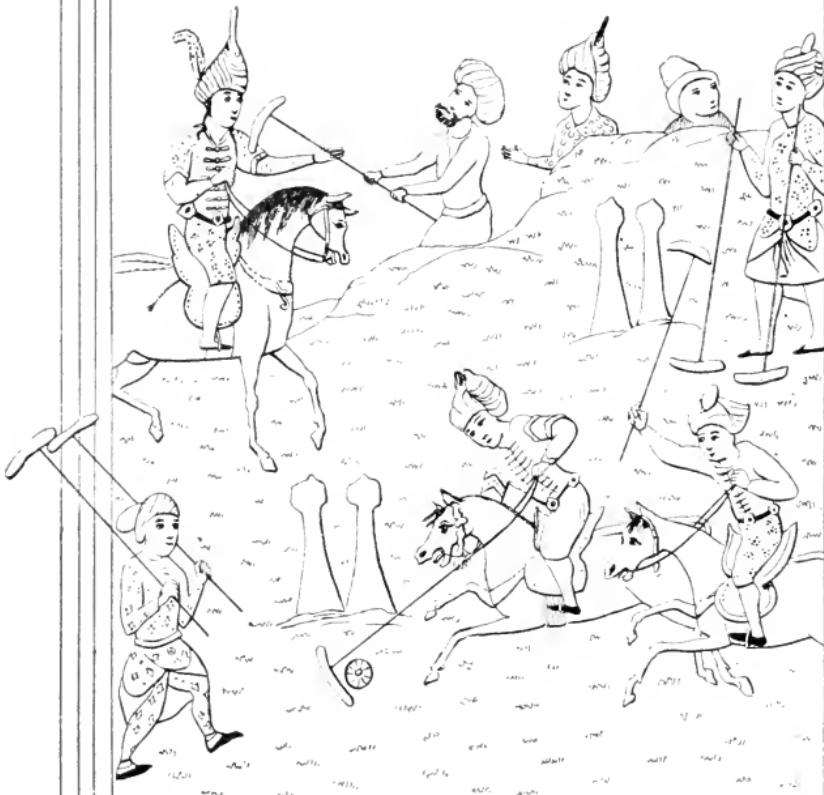


The
PERSIAN POETS



2000

شہسوار انوشن میدان می گوئن



THE GAME OF CHANGAN

From this quaint illustration may be seen the close resemblance of the Royal Game of Persia to the modern polo. It was played by horsemen who strove to drive a ball between upright goals by means of mallets.



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The
PERSIAN POETS

Edited by

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

I.

THE vital persistence of poetry is a kind of miracle ! A nation may not prize its bard while he lives, but after he is dead all the preservative forces are employed to perpetuate his songs. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, the *Kalevala*, the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Shah-Nameh*, become the chief glories, not alone of the country where they originate, but of the world. Kings and emperors conquer and destroy, and then try to hand their fame to posterity by magnificent constructions. But their names are only names, their cities and palaces crumble, and thousands of years later some curious excavator finds at the bottom of the heap a clay tablet on which is a simple little verse which reveals the thought of an unknown poet or gives a glimpse of a vanished civilization.

Of course, vast quantities of poems have perished, but that any of the epics or lyrics of antiquity should survive seems wonderful when one realizes the vicissitudes through which they have passed. Fire and rust and rain and the ignorance of men conspire to annihilate. The story is told that an unknown poet once offered to Abd-Allah ben Taher, Emir of Khorasan, a versified story. The bigoted prince tore the manuscript into tatters, declaring that there was no other poetry than the Koran, and that all else was falsehood and blasphemy. History is full of such instances. Thus the sand waste drowns out the fertile meadow. But we often see one solitary flower or grass-blade piercing through the arid soil.

Poetry is really the most precious possession of men, and history is not so much valued for its truth as for its grace.

Only its poetical passages are prized. The quaint legends that are found here and there in mediæval chronicles, lighting up the dreary banalities, are an implicit testimony to the power of imagination. Herodotus was not so accurate an historian as Thucydides, but we prefer his almost epic narration. The *Odyssey* outweighs them both.

Genuine poetry, like gold, is universal and survives all permutations. The Hebrew psalms, or their prototypes, the canticles of the Akkads, lose little in beauty or majesty translated into any language. While form makes a large part of the beauty of poetry, yet poetry is more than form. Homer in prose is more satisfactory than Homer in English hexameters. If the thought and the spirit are preserved, the metre of a translation is of comparatively small consequence.

There is in literature something akin to exosmosis in physics. Just as two gases confined in contiguous receptacles tend to mingle, so great poems go from one language to another. Sooner or later this process must take place. Everything good in Greek and Latin already exists in every modern tongue. If we believe in Emerson, there is no need of learning foreign languages : he found it more satisfactory to read their literatures in his own.

This is especially true of the more difficult languages like Russian, Hungarian, Persian, and Arabic, which few have time to master. We must depend on translations. Oriental poetry has had two serious drawbacks: first, those that devote themselves to the languages in which these poems are found are generally men of affairs and not poets; and secondly, the thought and spirit as well as the form are so alien and opposed to the practical, direct, and simple mind of the Westerner that his interpretation is often only a shot into the air, a guess likely to go amiss. Words simple in themselves, compounded form concepts of far different potentiality, just as charcoal and saltpetre put together make an explosive mixture. Thus in the *Bustan* of Sa'di

Darius, Dara, Lord of Iran and Turan, is called *far-ruh*, literally glory-cheek, which being interpreted means divine. A slave is expressed by the words *halqadar-gush* (ring-in-ear.) It is not without significance that Greece in Persian is called Rome — Rum ! Not only words but whole sentences must be interpreted with liberal imagination. Thus when Sa'di in his ghazel says, "If the sword is in thy hand, win the victory," he only means, Be a genuine poet if thou hast the skill.

When a famine is spoken of, its effects on men are indicated thus : "So lean a year was it that the full moon of men's faces became a new moon."

These difficulties, which are inherent, become intensified when the poet purposely mystifies and subtilizes. Wine no longer signifies wine, but the spirit ; no word has its normal meaning, and every line must have a gloss and a sophisticated interpretation.

No wonder the direct Western mind finds itself puzzled over these complications. It is instructive to compare the earlier and later versions of an identical poem.

The grammar of Persian is as simple and bald as English. Into its historical strata, allied indeed to English as even more closely to ancient Greek and Sanskrit, was injected a wonderful conglomerate of Arabic. Almost every Persian word has its Semitic equivalent and synonyme, giving a richness to the language analogous to what Chaucer found in the Normanized Saxon of his day. Arabic plurals are added to Iranian roots ; the fecundity of rhymes is vastly increased, so that in many poems there are commencement and mid-verse, as well as final, agreements, and, not content with masculine and feminine rhymes, the poet often carried the stress back four or five, or even six, syllables : as *haryha bashad* and *karyha bashad*.

The Oriental delight in puns finds frequent expression, and the thought is still further hidden from the unaided eye of the mind.

These are a few of the reasons why the vast mass of Eastern poetry is such a dark continent of literature. It still waits and invites investigation by the well-equipped explorer. The popularity of *Sohrab and Rustem*, of Sir Edwin Arnold's paraphrases, and especially Edward Fitzgerald's free and easy translations, seems to indicate that the way has been prepared for a more general exploitation of this splendid field ; but the poet of sufficient learning has not as yet appeared. Meantime we must content ourselves with the efforts that have already been made. They are by different hands and of greatly differing merit. The material is widely scattered, and to gather it together, to winnow out the best, requires judgment and literary skill. Those that read the selections that follow will decide for themselves whether the poetry is or is not worthy of preservation.¹

II.

Primitive Persian literature is scarcely more than a name. There are a few arrowhead inscriptions carved in the solid rock. The *Avesta* written in old Baktrian, was taken by the Parsee into India at the time of the Mohammedan conquest. Nothing was known of its existence till the eighteenth century. The first manuscript was brought to England in 1723 ; it was not translated into any European language until 1771. Even now scholars have scarcely ceased quarrelling over its interpretation. It is only a fragment of its former vastness, but this fragment contains many *yasts* or hymns, sonorous and majestic like the long Mihir Yast in which the virtues and powers of Mithra are extolled. They are attributed to Zarathustra or Zoroaster himself.

“*We sacrifice unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun,*” sings the Khorshed Yast. “*When the light of the Sun*

¹The curious will note with what assiduity the Irish cultivate Persian. The resemblance of the native name of Persia, Eran, to the native name of Ireland, Erin, is significant.

waxes warmer, then up stand the heavenly Yazatas (or Good Gods), by hundreds and thousands, they gather together its Glory ; they make its Glory pass down ; they pour its Glory upon the earth made by Ahura, for the increase of the world of holiness, for the increase of the creatures of holiness, for the increase of the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun.

“And when the Sun rises up, then the earth made by Ahura becomes clean ; the waters of the wells become clean ; the waters of the sea become clean ; the standing waters become clean ; all the holy creatures, the creatures of the Good Spirit, become clean.”

The language of these yasts is different from that dialect in which the rest of the *Avesta* is composed; its rhythmical forms also differentiate it; and the science of comparative philology has established its kinship with the language of the Cuneiform inscriptions left by Cyrus and the other Achemenidæ, and with Sanskrit. But the enterprise of modern scholarship has not as yet succeeded in finding any royal Persian library such as the explorers have found in Assyria. Persia, which has been called “the highway of the human race,” has been trodden under foot too many times by conquering armies to retain many vestiges of her indigenous literature. If Alexander the Great spared any of her secular books, they have long since perished. Whatever was saved exists only in permuted form in the legends and stories which later poets wove into their works. Even her history is legendary, and no one knows whether the so-called Pishdadian dynasty ever existed.

It is quite possible that the book of Esther in the Bible may have been taken with slight changes by its unknown Hebrew author from some ancient analogue. The *Cyropaædia* is a characteristic Persian romance, and some scholars are fain to believe that Xenophon may have heard it, or parts of it, during his celebrated expedition against the great king.

The *Shah-Nameh* is a repository of tales and legends which Firdausi only revamped from antecedent sources. Hundreds of the short stories used by later poets to illustrate their teachings may have been handed down from those far-off days. We may believe that similar conditions of fertility, wealth, and beauty such as brought forth in one era a multitude of singers, had similar results in ancient Eran.

There is no trace of Persian literature from the time of the overthrow of the Achemenian kingdom by Alexander the Great, or during all the reign of the Parthian Arsacidæ. In A.D. 226, Ardesher I. founded the new national dynasty of the Sassanidæ, whose official language was that “high piping Pehlevi,” or Pahlavi, mentioned in *Omar Khayyam*. It had a special script, and is still preserved comparatively free from impurities, by the million and a half of Parsees in Bombay and the scattered remnants of the fire-worshippers in Yezd. They preserved naturally only the religious works of that epoch : a cosmogony and geography, theological treatises and a vision of the Future Life, compared by the curious with Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: the *Book of Arda, Son of Viraf*. Everything else is lost ; the splendor and liberality of Chosroes the greatest of the Sassanian kings is but a name ; its only relics exist in the works of later poets, just as the ruins of a temple may be built into a palace. Yet we know that Bahram-Gor,¹ who reigned from 420 till 438, was fond of listening to popular ballads, one of which Firdausi has preserved. In the time of Khuzrev Parvez, who reigned from 590 till 628, there were two rival poets, Barbed and Serghish (Sergius, a Greek ?), and Barbed, a native of Shiraz, was appointed poet laureate and used to delight the court with his graceful rhymes : some of these, or at least their titles, Firdausi also preserved.

¹ The Persians claim that he himself not only was a poet, but also invented rhyme.

Professor Pizzi claims that the form of lyric verse called by the Arabs *qasida* or *kasida*, in which there is always a eulogy of some prince, is the continuation or transformation of the ancient Iranian hymn celebrating the gods and heroes and their doughty deeds: "a far-off echo of other praises offered with equal enthusiasm to masters not frail but immortal." Surely in literature, as in Nature, no element is lost.

For two hundred years after the Arabic conquest (in 641), such Persian poets as have come down to our knowledge adopted Arabic as their medium of expression, and that curious modification of Persian began which gave the language its script and its ill-fitting grammar and its multitude of alien Semitic words. Thalebi, a native of Nishapur, wrote in 1038 a book in Arabic, entitled *The Only Pearl of the World*, giving a list of the poets that flourished during the first centuries after the Hijra. *Stant nominum umbræ*. When the bigoted Khalifs ordered all Persian books to be burned, on the ground that the Koran was the only literature worth having, they could not destroy the spirit of a nation's past.

III.

The vitality of a language is in proportion to its simplicity. As Latin gave way to the simpler idioms which it tried to supplant, or coalesced with them in still less complicated forms, so Arabic was ultimately replaced by Farsi or modern Persian. This was a natural outcome of the law that disintegrates great kingdoms. The genius of a conqueror like Alexander the Great or the Khalif Omar may be able for a time to make the wide and alien provinces cohere, but his successors fail. His children become rivals, and then the suppressed nationalities wake to revolution. Such was the case with the reign of the Khalifs of Damascus and Baghdad. Under the Samanian Shahs,

who reigned during the tenth century (901–998), Persian again became a literary language. One of these kings, Nasr, had a reign of thirty years, and under him flourished the blind poet Rudaghi or Rudaki,¹ who has been called the Father of Persian poetry. He was born about 880 in the village of Rudag near Samarkand, and at the age of eight knew the Koran by heart and was already beginning to improvise verses. Shah Nasr richly rewarded him, and he died at the age of seventy-four or possibly earlier. He put into verse the book of *Kalila and Dimna*, which the Sassanian King Chosroes had brought from India. But that version is lost, and lost likewise are most of the million three hundred thousand distichs which he is said to have composed. A hundred books of poetry perished!

The few lines that have survived display vigor of expression, freshness of imagery, and clearness of ideas. He was too prodigal of his praises of Nasr, whom he compares in power to Alexander the Great, and in wisdom to Plato, but he set the key for Persian verse: he sang the delights of the budding spring, the cruelty and pride of his absent mistress, the sleepless nights and the sorrows which she caused him. Wine also he sang and the pleasures of youth. His descriptions of his love are exquisite: her eyes like twin narcissus flowers blooming under the curve of the dark brows; her silk-soft cheeks, her black hair like a net to capture the heart; he recalls so passionately the old days when joy was plentiful and money scarce; when beautiful-bosomed girls came to meet him and they drank the limpid wine. What, compared to those happy days, are the glory and the favor showered upon him by the glorious race of the Samanidæ? But the happy days of the sprightly, black-eyed, Houri-like maidens is passed: the world is all illusion and vanity. Bring me wine, and then let what must come, come!

Rudaghi was not the only poet of that day. The

¹ Ferid ud-Din Muhammad Rudaghi.

spring sun brings forth more than one violet from the same meadow. Abu Shukur of Balkh also complained of the misfortunes of love and harped or luted the beauty of his mistress. There was Shahid, also of Balkh, whose death Rudaghi bewailed in verse. He also saw in this world only misfortune and vanity; wisdom is the only pearl; death the only consolation for a ruined world.

Dakiki or Daqiqi, no one knows where born, whether at Bukhara or at Samarkand or at Tus, or how long he lived, was commissioned by Nuh, the son of the Samanian Mansur, to compose an epic version of the *Book of Kings*. He had made a beginning when he was killed by a slave, or page. Firdausi commemorated his character, his gentle spirit, and the death that came suddenly upon him, and incorporated in the *Shah-Nameh* the thousand lines or more in which the deeds of King Gushtasp are narrated. He too sang of spring and the breath of paradise breathing over the earth, young love writing its story on the desert sand, and the sweet roses. Four things he loved: the passionate pleading of the lute and the religion of Zerdusht (or Zoroaster) and sweet blood-hued wine and ruby lips. He too mourned in languishing strain the night when his lips were widowed of his love's. He would not wish to live if he must live without his mistress, the idol of his heart. He loved moonlight nights when the world was bright and the verdure spread out over the meadow like a Greek vestment: *Come, let us drink wine and sing jocund songs!* He yearned for change: just as water which stands too long in the pool grows stagnant, so he too long remaining in one place, however illustrious, waxes discontented.

A poet of distinguished station was the Emir Agachi of Bukhara, governor of Bayan. He was a warrior as well as a philosopher. Chinese in its terseness is his famous poem on the snowstorm: "*Look up at the sky and see the army of the snowflakes fly! Like white doves the hawks affray,*

they lose their way! Little of his verse remains, but he recorded in one stanza his love for his horse, his bow, his book and poetry, his lute, and his pen.

Omar, the astronomer-poet, had his prototype in Umarah or Amari of Merv, whose fame lasted for many generations. He lived at court honored as an astronomer and a poet. Later writers found in his writings, as in Omar's, the mystic doctrine of the Sufis. He bids his love perform the miracle of mingling fire and water: "*Look at that cup and that liquid! the cup is white and within it is a clear wine ruby-hued! That is how fire is mingled with water!*" It reminds one of Ben Jonson's poem: —

"Drink to me only with thine eyes."

His "idol" holds a wine-cup in her hand: it is the union of sun and moon! When she lifts the wine-cup and the ruby reflection of the wine shines on her lovely face, a shade of displeasure passes over it, but when the wine pours through her silver-white teeth it is as if the trailing garments of the moon delayed among the Pleiades upon the shining sky.

*"Thy desire, he sings, shall work fulfilled to-day,
Soon thou wilt come to the realms of thy fathers.
All the hopes of the sons of Adam hang on the neck of to-morrow."*

The same melancholy minor sounds in the verse of Ghilani, of whom nothing is known, and only a few lines remain: Like the autumn wind and like the spring clouds the time of his youth had fled from him! He recalls the days when his cheeks were flushed with health, when his ears were ever ringing with music and song, when his hands grasped the wine-cup proffered by what Mr. John Payne calls the *skinker!* — the *mughan* whom we much prefer to imagine a lovely damsel. But he ends it with the wail: *Now I go weeping and recalling the bright days of youth: oh, my youth, my youth!*

This cry for vanished youth is echoed by Khusravani,

who was almost as much of a mocker as Omar. He satirizes the old men who would try to deceive death by dyeing their gray hairs ; and as he lies on his deathbed he finds no grain of comfort in the leech or the priest or the astrologer or the quack with their medicaments, prayers, horoscopes, and talismans.

The few relics of these poets out of the enormous mass of verse which they composed, the unknown verse of others scarcely less known, the verse not known at all, make it probable that what is lost is no great loss. What poet lived in that half century between Rudaghi and Kisayi? Kisayi was born at Merv in February, 952 ; in an elegy written just before his death, he tells of his ambitions : to make songs and to enjoy all the good things of life. But instead he served like a mule, like a slave, and at the end what had he ? It is the old song : vanished youth, sweet joy of existence, beauty, fair girls, and wine, all departed. In his old age, with his head which has the whiteness of milk, there is nothing left but the fear of death, which makes him tremble as disobedient schoolgirls shake with terror at the lash. It is said that in his last unhappy days he gave himself up to a religious life and to the acquisition of what he calls true riches. Yet, like the hermit in the old Spanish tale, he looked back with yearning eyes on the life which he had desired but had not obtained. His poems on the lotus and the rose are exquisite, and the invitation which the bulbul utters, "Take thy true love by the hand in the early dawn and fly with him down into the garden," is an admirable example of Persian grace.

IV.

It will be seen that there was no sudden flaring up of Persian poetry in the person of Firdausi. He was the greatest of all. Not only as an epic poet but as a lyric poet he surpassed all others : the poem in which he

dreamed that he was lying in the dust, his heart consumed with anguish for his absent love and suddenly she entered (or is it he?) before him, is a marvellous effort of the imagination; the vividness of the dream and the passion of longing which it expresses are seldom excelled in literature: the picture of the daybreak interrupting the happy reunion is exquisitely painted.

Firdausi's contemporary and friend or rival (who can tell?), Farrukhi, had a happier lot. He was a native of Sistan, where his father was in the service of the governor. He early began to write poetry, and having a good voice was accustomed to sing his songs to the accompaniment of the lute. He fell in love with a slave of the governor's, but marriage with her brought him no increase of fortune. But he managed to have some of his songs and kasidas brought to the notice of a wealthy prince of Balkh. Through him he was introduced to Mahmud of Ghazni, where he soon acquired great honors and riches. He fell into disfavor shortly before Mahmud's death in 1030, and survived him seven years. Of his love songs none exist; none of his narrative poems have come down to us. His eulogy of Mahmud as a warrior has been preserved, and there are descriptions which he wrote of a royal hunt and of Mahmud's garden at Ghazni, which he compares to the glorious Kausar-watered paradise of the Mohammedans.

Still another of Firdausi's contemporaries was Unsuri or Ansari, a native of Balkh. At first he was a merchant, but having been robbed of all he had, he turned poet, and was introduced to the court of Mahmud, who speedily enriched him so that he was able to use kitchen utensils of silver and his table service was of gold. For a single song he is said to have received a thousand gold dinars, equivalent to \$2000. He died about 1040. He enjoyed the distinction of being called "king of poets," and when it is related that no less than four hundred rhymesters solicited of him

favors and honors from the Shah, one can easily believe that he earned his salary. He was praised and eulogized by this throng of hungry applicants, whatever envy they may have felt in their hearts, and more of their eulogies of him have come to us than of his own poetry. It is pleasant to believe that he had sufficient grace to recognize in Firdausi a greater man than himself, and that he magnanimously renounced the commission of writing the *Shah-Nameh* in his favor. He himself wrote in Persian verse the ancient tale of *Vamik and Azra* and two other long poems now lost; indeed his contribution to the lyre of his day was no less than thirty thousand verses, of which now only two or three insignificant fragments remain.

Persian poetry is generally considered as beginning with Abul Iasim Mansur, surnamed Firdausi, the son of Fakhr ud-din Ahmed of Tus in Khorasan. His name of Firdausi is the same as the Greek Paradeisos, our paradise, and may signify that he was the son of a gardener or a gardener himself, or that it was a poetical appellation, just as Omar may have been a tent-maker, and the Shaikh Farid ud-din Attar, a druggist. He is said to have been educated by his father, and to have been in the poetic art the pupil of Abu Nasr Asad ud-Din Ahmed Ibn Mansur, known as Asadi or Essedi.

Various stories are told of his introduction to Mahmud. One of them is that Asadi, who was invited to try his hand at putting the old *Book of Kings* into the new Persian, turned it over to his pupil. If, as it is said, the news had gone abroad that the great enterprise was waiting the master hand, the presence of four hundred poets at Ghazni is easily explained. And also the obstacles which they put into Firdausi's way before he had a chance to be heard. But when once Mahmud had listened to the story of *Rustem and Isfendyar*, he turned the ancient books over to the young poet, gave him a house in a garden, the inspiration of a beautiful young page who should supply

him with all that cheered as well as inebriated, and at desired intervals should touch the strings of the lute. All that and the promise of a gold piece for every line! Truly those "half-barbarous" provinces of Persia were the paradise for poets, and all that have lived since have been "idle singers of an empty day." And no wonder Firdausi wrote the longest poem that was ever put on record. It was finished in 1009, and by a sort of miracle it has come down to our day intact, while so many thousands of poems have perished.

Firdausi's tomb is said to have been still standing, not far from Tus, at the beginning of the last century, but it is now wholly destroyed and the place where the greatest poet of Persia was buried is unknown. But the poem itself is said to have lived in the hearts of the people, just as the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso is preserved in the memory of the Venetians. It was first collated by Baysingher, the nephew of Timur the Great (Tamerlane), about 1425. Sir William Jones, about 1774, brought it to the notice of European scholars; he supposed it was a collection of poems by different authors. In 1814, Atkinson published in Calcutta the episode of Sohrab, in an English version. The entire text was published in four volumes in 1829; Mohl's edition in six volumes, containing the Persian and his French prose version, appeared in Paris in 1850-1866. It still awaits the English scholar to perform a like task.

V.

Firdausi has been rightly called the Homer of Persia, since he, like the unknown unifier of the Grecian national songs, gathered together the scattered legends of ancient Persia. Pizzi says that the central subject of the long and magnificent narrative of the Persian *épopée* is the secular

struggle of the Iranians against the Devi or Demons, by whom are meant a primitive people subjected by them, and against the Turanians, a barbaric and ferocious nation from Northern Asia beyond the Oxus. This struggle became confused or entangled with the basic dualism of the religion of Zarathustra, which always held up the eternal opposition between good and evil, light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death, typified on the one hand in the beneficent creative god Ahura Mazda, or Ormuzd, and on the other, by the malign god Anra Mainyu, or Ahriman. Not only gods, but demigods, and heroes, superhuman as well as common, took part in the epic struggle.

The position of the early Iranians, between the snowclad mountains and the desert, may well have given birth to this religion of violent contrasts. Out of it grew the national epic, as from the German theogony arose the Nibelungenlied. It was a marvellous conception, and deserves its Wagner to bring it also into the realm of music and the drama. Nothing is more interesting than the transformation of the ingenious metal workers of ancient subjected populations through popular superstition into supernatural beings. Thus the palaces of King Jamshid and of Kai Kavus were the creation of the Devi; these miraculous beings taught King Tamuras to write, and they flew through the sky carrying on their shoulders the throne of Jamshid. In the same way Hephaistos in Greece was a lame and disreputable god working in subterranean forges; in the same way the Kobolds of the German legend dwelt in the bowels of the mountains and fabricated wondrous armor. Crimes and vices became personified in the forms of these Devi. Often they underwent grotesque transformations, as Firdausi conscientiously relates. Comparative mythology and comparative philology bind closely together the hidden elements of all the great epics: the same nature gods appear in the *Vedas* and the *Avesta*, in the *Iliad* and the *Sagas*. The Muse of history can disentangle

and interpret the secret history of our Aryan ancestors in the myths of the *Shah-Nameh*.

Firdausi was not the only Persian poet to draw his inspiration from the *Book of Kings*: Abul Hasan Ali, the son of Firdausi's teacher Asadi, and also known as Asadi, wrote the *Ghershasp-Nameh* or *Book of Gher-shasp*, which was an episode neglected by Firdausi. Still another imitative continuation or complement was the *Sam-Nameh*, or *Book of Sam*, eleven thousand lines in length, describing the wars of that hero in China, his loves with the beautiful Peri-dokht, daughter of the Chinese emperor and mother of Zal, and the discovery of the treasures of King Jamshid. The authorship of this work is not known, but is supposed to be of much later date. There are in manuscript still other epics belonging to the same cycle, and relating the exploits of Rustem's sons, Gihau-ghir, Feramurz, and Sohrab. The pathetic story of Rustem and Sohrab also found many imitators, and Sohrab himself, if we may believe these unknown poets, had several sons whose gallant deeds fill many weary lines.

VI.

It would take a volume to give even a hint at the contents of all the Persian poets, whose ghazels and rubaiyat (or quatrains), and kasidas and contrasts, fill the multitudinous manuscripts collected with patient zeal by so many Persian scribes. Von Hammer and Ethe and Pizzi have analyzed their works and published more or less faithful versions of their characteristic verses. There are hundreds of them, but the sacred number seven enumerates those that the Persians themselves and critics generally consider the greatest. These, beside Firdausi, are Anvari, Nizami, Jalal ud-Din Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz, and Jami. These are the seven great stars of the Pleiades, though the astron-

omer with his opera glass can find almost countless thousands twinkling in the literary firmament: Azraki and Amiq and Hanzalah and Humam-ud-Din and Isfarangi and Khusrev of Delhi, and Mahmud Ibn Abd ul-Kerim Ibn Yahya Shabisteri and others with equally long names from Abbas to Zagani.

Of recent years the Western world has discovered in Abu'l Fath Umar Ibn Ibrahim Khayyami, known as Omar the Tent-Maker, one of the greatest and certainly now the most popular of the Persian Pleiads. He burned out into the first magnitude like Nova Persei, but has not faded. In Persia he is scarcely known. An American woman, long resident in Paris, happened to know the Persian consul there, and recently showed to him Sibleigh's French version of Fitzgerald. He had never heard of Omar Khayyam, was amazed at the proportions of the cult when it was explained to him, was delighted with the verses, and grateful to have been introduced to such a fascinating author of his own country.

A large part of the verse attributed to Omar consists undoubtedly of spurious quatrains, imitations of the original being as facile to make as imitations of his English understudy. Nor are the stories of his life founded on authentic documents.¹ All the more remarkable, therefore, is the distinctness of his personality, especially when one realizes that he touched no new chord; it is the old strain of pessimism, with gleams of satiric humor tempered with liberality. His popularity may be partially explained by his comparative simplicity. There are few of the far-fetched conceits so characteristic of Oriental poetry. It is direct and therefore universal, and even

¹ Most that is known or fabled about him, including the recent discovery of references to him embodied in the article in Baron Rosen's testimonial volume, has been woven into a romance of his life: *Omar the Tent-Maker*, by Nathan Haskell Dole, Boston, 1898.

those that are not inclined to accept his philosophy of life feel the spell of his graceful melancholy, his audacious irreverence for empty forms, and his frank enjoyment of present pleasure. Fascinating as Fitzgerald's English version is, its uniform measure and simplicity of rhyme give little idea of the varying rhythms and captivating complicated rhymes of the original Persian. Mr. John Payne has translated all of the verse attributed to him into measure purporting to represent the original, but such a *tour de force* must of necessity fail. Only two or three in a hundred lend themselves to such imitation. Here is one that gives a fair idea of the Persian :—

*"The Breath of the early Spring in the Face of the Rose is sweet;
The Face of my Love in the shade of the garden-close is sweet;
Naught thou canst say of the Day that has vanished away is sweet;
Be happy; think not of the Past for To-day as it glows is sweet!"*

If one could only twist the word "sweet" into a play on the word "suite," it would be still more after the Persian manner.

Arhad ud-Din Anvari is known as the chief poet of courtly elegance and high-flown encomium, the praiser of princes and the satirist of love-lorn ghazelists. He was a native of the province of Dasht. He studied astronomy and other sciences in the college of Tus, and it is said that as he was sitting one day at the gate of the school, he saw, passing by, a great lord accompanied by a throng of attendants magnificently arrayed. When he learned that it was a court poet, he instantly resolved to be likewise a court poet. He composed a panegyric in honor of Sanjar, and asked to be received at court. His prayer was heard, and he lived in great honor until into the reign of Toghrul, son of Alp Arslan. His fall from grace was due to a prediction on which his credit as an astronomer depended. He announced that in consequence of a conjunction of the seven planets in Libra in the autumn of 1185 a terrible convulsion of nature would take place. People were frightened,

and took refuge in the mountains and in caverns ; but, on the day set, the sun rose cloudless and the breeze scarcely blew. Anvari took this defeat so completely to heart that he returned to Nishapur ; then to Balkh, where he died, either in 1191 or 1195.

One of his best poems was written in behalf of Sanjar, when that prince was captured and imprisoned by a Turkoman horde that had overrun Khorasan. It was sent to Ahmed, son of Suleiman, at Samarkand, and resulted in Sanjar's liberation. It has been called *The Tears of Khorasan*. It begins with an exordium to the morning wind as it passes by Samarkand to bear to the sovereign king "the plaint of Khurasania plunged in woe." It tells of the unhappy state of Khorasan and her people—a tale so grievous that it would tear the ears to hear it ; to see would suffuse the eyes with tears of blood. It begs the Prince of Samarkand to come and wreak vengeance on the cursed, turbulent Ghuzi. It gives a piteous description of the excesses committed by these barbarians—the mosques converted into stables, the nobles reduced to serve as slaves, the ravished virgins, and the ruined homes. He begs him by that God who allows him to coin money, who has placed the diadem on his brow, to rescue from these rapacious, vile, and cruel Turkomans the heart of God's people.

This poem was translated by Captain Fitzpatrick for the *Asiatic Miscellany* of 1785 ; but, like most Oriental poetry rendered into English at that time, is so hopelessly alien in form and spirit to the original that it is not worth citing. In his last melancholy days, Anvari satirizes the poets that lie awake all night trying to describe sugary lips and curling tresses. He himself had composed songs and satires, but as such work is unworthy of a man, he confesses the harm and violence his genius had done to others, and resolves to find the path of security in the religious life aloof from the world. One seeks in vain to find in English any adequate translation of Anvari's works.

VII.

If we had all of Nizami's fivefold works,¹ it would be in itself a sea of verse. Little is known of him except that he was born in 1141 in the mountainous region of Rum, and spent the larger part of his life at Ganja in Arran, where he died in 1201 or 1202. His tomb was still shown threescore years ago. His first work was the *Makhzan ul-Azrar*, or *Treasury of Mysteries*, composed in 1179. This was followed by four romantic poems of epic proportions : *The Story of Khusrev and Shirina*, taken from ancient Persian history ; the famous Bedouin love story of *Majnun and Laili* ; the *Haft Paikar* or *Seven Beauties*, in which he relates the adventures of the Sassanian King and Huntsman Bahram-Gor and his seven wives ; the *Fortunes of Alexander* or *Book of Iskander* (*Iskander-Namah*), an epic after the manner of Firdausi. It is said that he also published (in 1188) a *Divan*, or collection of ghazels and kasidas numbering twenty thousand verses. But most of these have perished. Nizami is represented in this volume by extracts from *Majnun and Laili*. Sa'di says of him : —

“Gone is Nizami, our exquisite pearl, which Heaven in its kindness
Formed of the purest dew, formed for the gem of the world!
Calmly it shone in its brightness, but by the world unregarded,
Heaven assuming its gift, laid it again in its shell.”

and Hafiz writes : —

“This ancient vault containeth nothing beneath it comparable in beauty to the words of Nizami.”

One might perhaps mention here the epic and lyric poet Khusrev of Delhi, who imitated Nizami in his mystic poem, the *Matla ul-Anvar*, or *Of the Stars*, in his *Ayinab-i Iskander* or *Mirror of Alexander*, and in his *Hasht*

¹ Known in Persian as *Penj Ghenj* or *The Five Treasures*; in Arabic simply as *Khamsa*, or *The Five*.

Bihisht or Eight Paradises. He boasted of having composed nearly a half million couplets. One of his quatrains has a melancholy beauty : “ *I went to the graveyard and wept bitterly for absent friends now the captives of non-existence. ‘ Where are they ? ’ I asked in sadness, ‘ those dear friends of my heart ? ’ And a voice from the grave softly replied : ‘ Where are they ? ’ ”*

Of Rumi, Sa’di, Hafiz, and Jami, this book speaks more fully, each in his proper place, and with abundant illustrations of their famous verse.

VIII.

One cannot leave the subject of Persian poetry without a word regarding the mysticism which permeates it. To us who read poetry for poetry’s sake the mystic interpretation is almost an impertinence. Just as we know that the *Faerie Queene* is a morality in verse, and *Pilgrim’s Progress* is a morality in prose, but find all of our pleasure in them apart from the poet’s and the preacher’s primary intent, so we resent the Sufistic reading of esoteric spiritual meanings into verse that is sufficient for us in its simple outward beauty. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid the fact that most Persian lyric poetry is double in its significance, and has been so interpreted.

All Persian mysticism goes back to the philosophic conception of God : if one believes that God is the responsible source of all action, then logically there can be no sin, no difference between creeds ; man may say boldly as two of the earliest mystics, Hallaj and Bestam, said, “ I am God.” since light reflected is still light. Shabistari demands : “ What are mosque, synagogue and monastery ? What value have they in presence of the genuine religion of the mind and the heart, free from every bond of form ? ” So Omar Khayyam makes sport of the two and seventy sects. What is heresy to him ? What is Islamism or sin or piety ?

God alone is his goal. "He is a good fellow -- all will be well," he says, in his boldly irreverent style.

Love becomes then a mystic passion, signifying union with God, and all the passionate utterances of the Persian poets are interpreted in a manner exactly analogous to the ecclesiastical explanation of the Song of Solomon, which in its outward form is certainly suggestive of anything but spirituality.

Sufism is a form of mysticism. The Sufis formed a body of fanatic believers, living in monasteries or colleges under the guidance of an acknowledged master, and devoting their lives to philosophic study and to works of ascetic charity. The origin of the word is not surely known; but some would derive it from the Greek Sophia, meaning wisdom, for of course Greek philosophy made its way to Persia in very early days, and later neo-Platonic and gnostic ideas attached themselves to Oriental thought.

Abu Said, of Khorasan, who died in 1048, is said to have established a rule for the mystics. But Abu Hashim, a native of Kufa, who died at Damascus in 767, has the reputation of having established the first monastery, or, at least, to have belonged to it. The spread of mysticism in Persia is attributed, in no small measure, to the ancient inheritance of the people. The lofty teachings of the *Avesta* were rendered terrible to people by a ritual which was only equalled in its barbarity by the tabu of the South Pacific. Islam freed them from that unspeakable burden, but the lofty teachings still remained a holy memory. The fatalism which undoubtedly made beggary and vagabondage an easy and welcome refuge for the lazy, found its loftiest expression in many of the Persian poets: in Ubu Said, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, and Nasir.

The first of the mystic poets was Abu Said of Khorasan, who was born in 967, and died in 1048. The accounts of his life declare that he was converted to asceticism by

a crazy man named Lokman. Abu Said for seven years sat in one corner of a monastery, crying, "God ! God !" Thus he obtained the reputation of being a saint, and when he removed to the desert, people came on pilgrimages to him, and bought for twenty dinars the seeds of the tamarind fruit from the tree under which he sat. He declared, wholly in the spirit of mediæval ecclesiasticism. "the more a man knows of this world, the less he knows of God," a curious modification of Christ's command to be like little children. When asked what the real life of a Sufi was, he replied, "To put from the body all thou hast, give all that thou hast in thy hand, and care not whatever may befall." Love, according to him, was "the net of God, whereby he catches man." He was the friend of Abu Ali Ibn Sina or Avicenna, who said of him, "He sees all that I know." Of Abu Sina, he said, "He knows all that I see." His rubaiyat are passionate to a degree :—

"*Let Rizvan angel of paradise have his splendor, let the angels have their praise,*" he sings, "*let the guilty suffer in hell, let the good enjoy paradise, let the Kings of China and Persia and Rum have this world, but we have our lovely ones, our lovely ones have us!*"

"*On that day when thou shalt be my spouse, I shall not envy the blessed their delights in paradise. Without thee heaven were a desert ; with thee the desert were heaven.*"

He sings of spending the long night with his idol, and no end of their sweet intercourse ensued: "What fault has the night?" he asks, "we had so much to say!"

"*I said, 'For whom adornest thou thyself?' 'For my own pleasure,' she replied, 'for I am the only one, I am love, I am the lover, I am the beautiful one, the mirror and the beauty which beholds itself therein.'*"

"*Ah, thou whose brow is like the moon which beautifies all the world, thou whom to be with both night and day all hearts desire — if thou art sweet to any more than me,*

alas! how full of woe am I! How unhappy all the rest if thou to them art what thou art to me!"

Here, as everywhere, the beloved one thus passionately adored is God.

Nasir, the son of Khusrev, another of the mystic poets, was born in Balkh in 1003. He was in the service of the Seljukian Prince Chakar-beg Daud; but, when he was about forty, he was admonished in a dream to go to Mecca. Then he travelled for seven years, and wrote a description of his adventures. He was also author of the mystic *Rushanai Nameh* or *Book of Light*. His acquaintance with the world opened his mind, and he was persecuted as a heretic; consequently he returned to Yumgan in the province of Badakhshan, and lived there in solitude, visited occasionally by the devout. He had a few ardent followers. There he died in 1088. The principal foundation of his teachings was the Greek injunction, "Know thyself." Only by self-knowledge can one know God. And he sings God's praise and proclaims the vanity of all earthly things. Sufficient happiness for him is a garden, and if in that garden he has his friend, "then the Spring Roses bloom, and those roses have no thorns."

Still another of the minor mystic poets was Afzal-ud-Din Ibrahim Ibn Ali Shirvani, known as Khakani because he lived at the court of the Prince of Shirvan, Khakan Kabir Minochihr. He was born about 1040. He was disgusted with court life, and determined to retire from the world and to live like a dervish. But the Sultan would not hear to it. He therefore escaped from the court, but was captured, brought back, and confined for seven months in the castle of Shabran, where he had many Christians as his companions. During his confinement he composed a kasida full of bitter complaints, and speaking so freely of other religions that a friend of his wrote a commentary on it to remove the suspicion that Khakani was not a good Mohammedan. On his release, he remained for a time at court,

but was at last permitted to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. He described his journey in a poem called, *The Gifts of the Two Iraks*. He went to Tabriz to the court of Toghrul Beg, the last of the Seljukian Turks, and died there in 1186, or possibly 1193. Many of his poems have been preserved, and he is regarded as certainly one of the sweetest lyric voices of Persia. What could be lovelier than his ghazel, which begins, "*I do not seek to find the moon: thy face is moon enough for me!*" Of course, with his yearning for the ascetic life, the Sufis find in his love poems also the mystic desire of uniting his soul with God's. To him the meditations of the mystic life were preferable to the pleasures of the world. He, like all the East, believed the soul of man to be but an emanation from the essence of God, and his chief desire to be reabsorbed, as the bubble on the ocean breaks and falls back into the Infinite.

Slightly earlier in time was the Shaikh Sanai, who was born at Ghazni about 1118. He, like many of the other Persian poets, frequented the courts of the Ghasnavide kings and princes, and celebrated their deeds in his kasidas, but his conscience was awakened when he overheard some one remark, "Sanai with his learning is ignorant of the purpose for which God created him; when he appears before his Maker and is asked what he has brought with him, he will be able only to show panegyrics on kings and princes — mortals like himself." The same critic, who was a crazy man, predicted that he would become blind.

Sanai took these words to heart and devoted himself henceforth to the religious life, seeking instruction from the famous Shaikh Abu Yusuf of Hamadan, whose college or cell was called the Ka'ba of Khorasan. It is said that when Bahram-Shah desired to marry him to his sister, he wrote a quatrain declaring that he was not a man for women, honors, or gold, but all he wished was to be a

¹ Abu'l-Maj'd Majdud Ibn Adam Sanai.

leader of religious men. His chief work bears the Arabic title of *Hadīqat-ul-Haqīqat*" or *Garden of Truth*, dedicated to his would-be brother-in-law, Bahram-Shah of Ghazni. It is divided into ten books and has been compared to Brunetto Latini's *Tesoro* an encyclopedic medley of all that was known in his day. One part praises the Koran, another declares the unity of God, another sings the glory of Mahomet, the prophet of Ali and his sons, martyrs for the faith; others treat of human reason, of the excellence of knowledge, and the nature of love. The sixth part sets out to treat of the spirit of the universe, but the poet gets entangled in descriptions of spring and the beauty of the herbage, and the mystic doctrine still holds aloof. In the eighth he describes the stars and the marvels of the heavens; in the ninth he explains the nature of the union of the soul with God. And finally, in the tenth part, he accumulates all that he should have logically distributed through the other nine, and so extends it that it constitutes a third of the whole work, which is composed of eleven thousand couplets.

It is regarded as the pattern for the better known works of Attar and Rumi.

IX.

Enough has been said to show that the Persian literature offers a vast field for study. The present volumes contain selections from the seven principal poets of Persia; they had naturally to be taken from such translations as already exist in English, and are therefore of varying value as representing the originals. But assuredly enough of the light shines through the more or less translucent medium to give a pleasing idea of the wealth of poetry which the wonderful land of Persia inspired. Much of what is best is here gathered, and whether taken in its liberal or its

esoteric meaning, will find a response in the hearts of those that love lofty ideas melodiously expressed.¹

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

NEW YORK, April 27, 1901.

¹ Throughout the book accents have been purposely omitted. The question of the transliteration of Persian and Arabic words and names, many of which have consonantal values not existing in English, is hopelessly discordant and confused. There is Muhammad, Mahomet, Mohammed; there is Koran and Qu'ran; there is Omar and 'Umēr; there is Saadi and Sade and Sa'di; there is rubayat and rubā'iyyât; there is Kaiam, Khayyam, Kheyam; there is Makka, and Mekka and Mecca; Caliph, and Khalif and Kaleef; Dervish and Darwesh, and there are dozens of others. Every scholar has had apparently his own scheme, and the less he really knew, and the more he wished the world to think he knew, the more he sophisticated his spellings with breathings and accents and marks of quantity. Except in text-books, such affectations are impertinences and repel the reader. But consistency is the last jewel to be discovered in the spelling of Oriental words.

FLOWERS FROM PERSIAN POETS.

FIRDAUSI.

PERSIAN poetry begins in the tenth century with Firdausi, and practically ends in the fifteenth with Jami. The number of minor poets scattered through this time is legion; indeed it has been well said that every Persian is born with a song on his lips. But of the famous poets there are seven preëminent, sometimes called "The Persian Pleiades."

Firdausi, although not the father of Persian poetry,¹ yet stands as the Homer of the East. Of his life we know little. His real name was Abul Kasim. He was born, according to Mohl,² in the year 1010 A.D., at Shadab, a suburb of Tus, a city in Khorasan. He married at the age of twenty-eight, and lived to be over eighty.

It is said that the boyish dream of this future Chaucer of Persia—as Miss Costello calls him—was to have money enough to build a dike to keep the river which ran through his father's grounds³ from overflowing its banks. This dream was realized, but not in the lifetime of Fir-

¹ Rudaki was the father of Persian poetry.

² Jules de Mohl, the great French authority. Atkinson places Firdausi's birth at about 950 A.D.; Professor Pizzi, 940 A.D.

³ Firdausi's father is said to have been gardener for the Governor of Tus. According to some authorities, the name Firdausi, which is the Persian form for Paradise or Garden, was only the poetic *takhallus* assumed by the singer.

dausi. Cheated, wronged, exiled, he died in obscurity, a disappointed old man. Such was the reward received for thirty years spent in writing the *Shah-Nameh*, or Book of Kings, a national history in rhyme covering a period of 3600 years, from Kaiumers,¹ the first Pishdadian king, to the death of Yezdjird in 650 A.D. This book is called the Iliad of the East, and is, by the way, longer than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together, and is prized by Mohammedan nations as probably their greatest work.

Briefly, this is the story of the *Shah-Nameh*, a combination of fact and fiction handed down by the oral tradition.

Yezdjird, the last Sasanian king, collected all the histories and traditions connected with Persia and had them put together. These formed the book known as the *Bustan-Nameh*, which, during the Arabian conquest, was found in the sacked library belonging to Yezdjird. Historical chronicles were afterward added, bringing it down to the death of Yezdjird. In the eleventh century this book fell into the hands of the great Mahmud of Ghazni, an accomplished monarch who had already ordered a history of Persia to be written in verse. From the *Bustan-Nameh* he selected seven stories, which he distributed among the poets of his court, so that he might judge of their respective merits for the proposed history. To Unsari fell the story of Rustem and Sohrab; Rustem is the Persian Hercules, although his labors were but seven instead of twelve. With this story Unsari did so well that at first to him was given the honor of writing the history ordered by Mahmud. Through Unsari, Firdausi, whose genius was becoming recognized, was brought under the patronage of the Sultan. The story of how this happened is thus related:—

It seems that Unsari and two other celebrated poets, Asjedi and Farrukhi, were drinking wine in a fair Persian

¹ Kaiumers is the Adam of the fire-worshippers, grandson of Noah, according to the Mohammedans.

garden near Ghazni, when they saw a stranger approach, and fearing that he would interrupt them, decided to rid themselves of him by telling him that no one not a poet was allowed to join their company. When Firdausi declared that he also was a poet, they thus addressed him : " Well, then, we will each make an extemporaneous verse, and if you are able to follow them up with promptitude and effect, you shall be admitted as our approved companion."

Firdausi expressed his willingness to submit to this test, and Unsari thus began upon an apostrophe to a beautiful woman, making use of a word to which they knew of only two possible rhymes : —

" The light of the moon in thy splendor would fail."

Asjedi rejoined : —

" The rose in the bloom of thy cheek would turn pale."

Then Farrukhi : —

" The glance of thine eye darts through close-woven mail."

It was now Firdausi's turn ; and he said without a moment's pause, but with admirable felicity : —

" Like the spear-thrusts of Ghiv, Poshen's armor assail."

The poets were astonished at the readiness of the stranger ; and being totally ignorant of the story of Ghiv and Poshen, inquired of him from whence it was derived ; when Firdausi related to them the encounter as described in the *Bustan-Nameh*. Atkinson says that " they treated him with the greatest kindness and respect, and were so pleased with the power and genius he displayed on other subjects, that they recommended him to the patronage of Shah Mahmud." Other authorities state that they were jealous of him and interposed obstacles in his way. However it was, he was brought to the notice of Mahmud, who became so delighted with him that no honors seemed too great to bestow upon him. One legend has it that he gave to the young poet the surname of Firdausi, saying :

"You have made my court as resplendent as Firdus" (Paradise). He also promised him for every thousand couplets a thousand pieces of gold.

So for years Firdausi sunned himself in royal favor, living near the palace in a beautiful house given him by the Sultan. The walls were decorated with martial scenes painted by the great artists of Persia, in order to fire the imagination of the poet.

His work begins with a eulogy of the Sultan; a verse of which is as follows:—

"Praise, praise to Mahmud, who of like renown,
In battle or the banquet, fills the throne;
Lord of the realms of Chin and Hindustan,
Sovereign and Lord of Persia and Turan,
With his loud voice he rends the flintiest ear;
On the land a tiger fierce, untouched by fear,
And on the wave, he seems the crocodile
That prowls amidst the waters of the Nile.
Generous and brave, his equal is unknown;
In deeds of princely worth he stands alone.
The infant in the cradle lisps his name;
The world exults in Mahmud's spotless fame.
In festive hours Heaven smiles upon his truth;
In combat deadly as the dragon's tooth;
Bounteous in all things, his exhaustless hand
Diffuses blessings through the grateful land;
And, of the noblest thoughts and actions, lord;
The soul of Gabriel breathes in every word.
May Heaven with added glory crown his days;
Praise, praise to mighty Mahmud — everlasting praise!"

For thirty years Firdausi worked on the sixty thousand couplets¹ of the *Shah-Nameh*, refusing any money for it until it should be finished. In the eleventh century it was completed. Now, at this time there was in the court a Prime Minister, Hasan Meymendi, a conceited favorite of the Sultan. He, being jealous of the Persian poet laureate, who had not celebrated him in the poem,

¹ Few copies now contain the original number.

used every means to injure him with the Sultan. When the elephant loaded with the promised payment reached Firdausi, imagine his surprise to find the gold had been changed into silver ! He was in a public bath at the time that the gift came, and was so enraged that he recklessly gave away the whole amount, a third of which went to the slave who brought it. “The Sultan shall know,” said he, “that I did not bestow the labor of thirty years on a work to be rewarded with dirhems¹!” The Sultan was at first ashamed of Hasan’s unworthy treatment of Firdausi, but the clever and malicious minister, aided by jealous poets, argued that the *Shah-Nameh* was heretical, and finally Mahmud sentenced Firdausi to be trampled to death by elephants. Firdausi happened to meet Mahmud in his garden and improvised some verses in his honor, and was pardoned. But he found it advisable to leave the city; this he did at night and alone; but he left behind him the following famous satire, the most bitter ever penned: —

“And thou wouldest hurl me underneath the tread
 Of the wild elephant, till I were dead !
 Dead ! by that insult roused, I should become
 An elephant in power, and seal thy doom —
 Mahmud ! if fear of man hath never awed
 Thy heart, at least fear thy Creator, God.
 Full many a warrior of illustrious worth,
 Full many of humble, of imperial birth :
 Tur, Selim, Jemshid, Minuchihr the brave,
 Have died ; for nothing had the power to save
 These mighty monarchs from the common doom ;
 They died, but blest in memory still they bloom.
 Thus kings, too, perish — none on earth remain,
 Since all things human seek the dust again.

O, had thy father graced a kingly throne,
 Thy mother been for royal virtues known,
 A different fate the poet then had shared,
 Honors and wealth had been his just reward ;

¹ Small silver pieces.

But how remote from thee a glorious line!
 No high, ennobling ancestry is thine;
 From a vile stock thy bold career began,
 A Blacksmith was thy sire of Isfahan.
 Alas! from vice can goodness ever spring?
 Is mercy hoped for in a tyrant king?
 Can water wash the Ethiopian white?
 Can we remove the darkness from the night?
 The tree to which the bitter fruit is given,
 Would still be bitter in the bowers of Heaven;
 And a bad heart still keeps its vicious course;
 Or if it changes, changes for the worse;
 Whilst streams of milk, where Eden's flowrets blow,
 Acquire more honeyed sweetness as they flow.
 The reckless king who grinds the poor, like thee,
 Must ever be consigned to infamy!

* * * * *

The toil of thirty years is now complete,
 Record sublime of many a warlike feat,
 Written midst toil and trouble, but the strain
 Awakens every heart, and will remain
 A lasting stimulus to glorious deeds;
 For even the bashful maid, who kindling reads,
 Becomes a warrior. Thirty years of care,
 Urged on by royal promise, did I bear,
 And now, deceived and scorned, the aged bard
 Is basely cheated of his pledged reward!"

Then, like Dante, the white-haired old man became a wanderer.

At Bagdad he was a great favorite of the Kalif, in whose honor, according to one legend, he added a thousand couplets to the *Shah-Namah*¹ and was rewarded with the sixty thousand gold dinars² that the Sultan had promised but never given him. He also wrote a short poem called "Yusuf and Zulaikha": later remodelled by Jami.³ After Firdausi's escape the enraged Sultan,

¹ This addition is found only in one Ms., and is generally believed at the present time to be apochryphal.

² Gold coin worth about \$2.50.

³ See Vol. II.

hearing that he was at Baghdad, sent to the Calif demanding his return, but the poet finally sought refuge at Rustemdar, where the governor offered him a certain amount of gold if he would cancel the Satire against Mahmud. This Firdausi consented to do, and then he returned to Tus, where his old teacher, Essedi,¹ still lived.

In the meantime the Sultan had learned of his minister's treachery, and had compelled him to pay back the sixty thousand pieces of gold he had kept Firdausi from receiving. He also banished him from court forever. Regret at losing Firdausi, the greatest ornament of his court, and remorse for the treatment the poet had received at his hands so weighed on the Sultan, that he finally endeavored to make reparation. Learning that Firdausi was living obscurely at Tus, he sent him the long-delayed payment, together with camels loaded with princely gifts; but too late! The royal retinue met the funeral of the great poet at the city gates. Firdausi's tomb was in a garden near the city of Tus, and was once eagerly visited by pilgrims.

The money was paid to the poet's daughter, but she disdainfully refused it. However, relatives took it and built with it a bridge, the dreamed-of dike, and a house of refuge for travellers, all of which memorials are now gone. But his fame lives on, and even now cities and towns bear the names of the heroes from the *Shah-Nameh*, which has lived through nine centuries.

There are innumerable manuscript copies of this great work in Persian. These manuscripts are wonderfully beautiful. The scribes use Egyptian reeds and the blackest of ink which never loses its color. The favorite works of the poets are usually written on the finest of silky paper, powdered with gold or silver dust. The margins are richly illuminated and the whole perfumed with sandal-wood or some costly essence. The illuminated title pages are of elaborate design.

Essedi: see Appendix.

Among the many episodes of this epic, among its dragons and its giant feats of valor, perhaps the most moving is the famous poem of Sohrab, a poem made familiar to all English readers by Mr. Matthew Arnold.

It was no idle boast of Firdausi's when he said that he should write —

“What no tide
Shall ever wash away, what men
Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide.”

SOHRAB.¹

O YE, who dwell in Youth's inviting bowers,
Waste not, in useless joy, your fleeting hours,
But rather let the tears of sorrow roll,
And sad reflection fill the conscious soul.
For many a jocund spring has passed away.
And many a flower has blossomed, to decay ;
And human life, still hastening to a close,
Finds in the worthless dust its last repose.
Still the vain world abounds in strife and hate,
And sire and son provoke each other's fate ;
And kindred blood by kindred hands is shed,
And vengeance sleeps not — dies not, with the dead.
All nature fades — the garden's treasures fall,
Young bud, and citron ripe — all perish, all.
And now a tale of sorrow must be told,
A tale of tears, derived from Mubid old,
And thus remembered. —

With the dawn of day,

¹ Mr. James Atkinson's translation.

Rustem arose, and wandering took his way,
Armed for the chase, where sloping to the sky,
Turan's lone wilds in sullen grandeur lie ;
There, to dispel his melancholy mood,
He urged his matchless steed through glen and wood.
Flushed with the noble game which met his view,
He starts the wild-ass o'er the glistening dew ;
And, oft exulting, sees his quivering dart,
Plunge through the glossy skin, and pierce the
heart.—

Tired of the sport, at length, he sought the shade,
Which near a stream embowering trees displayed,
And with his arrow's point, a fire he raised,
And thorns and grass before him quickly blazed.
The severed parts upon a bough he cast,
To catch the flames, and when the rich repast
Was drest, with flesh and marrow, savory food,
He quelled his hunger ; and the sparkling flood
That murmured at his feet his thirst represt ;
Then gentle sleep composed his limbs to rest.

Meanwhile his horse, for speed and form renown'd,
Ranged o'er the plain with flowery herbage crown'd,
Encumbering arms no more his sides opprest,
No folding mail confined his ample chest,¹
Gallant and free, he left the Champion's side,
And cropp'd the mead, or sought the cooling tide ;
When lo ! it chanced amid the woodland chase,
A band of horsemen, rambling near the place,

¹ The armor called Burgustuwan almost covered the horse, and was usually made of leather and felt-cloth.

Saw, with surprise, superior game astray,
And rushed at once to seize the noble prey ;
But, in the imminent struggle, two beneath
His steel-clad hoofs received the stroke of death ;
One proved a sterner fate — for downward borne,
The mangled head was from the shoulders torn.
Still undismayed, again they nimbly sprung,
And round his neck the noose entangling flung :
Now, all in vain, he spurns the smoking ground,
In vain the tumult echoes all around ;
They bear him off, and view, with ardent eyes,
His matchless beauty and majestic size ;
Then soothe his fury, anxious to obtain,
A bounding steed of his immortal strain.

When Rustem woke, and miss'd his favorite horse,
The loved companion of his glorious course ;
Sorrowing he rose, and, hastening thence, began
To shape his dubious way to Samengan ;
“ Reduced to journey thus, alone ! ” he said,
“ How pierce the gloom which thickens round my
head ;
Burthen'd, on foot, a dreary waste in view,
Where shall I bend my steps, what path pursue ?
The scoffing Turks will cry, ‘ Behold our might !
We won the trophy from the Champion-knight !
From him who, reckless of his fame and pride,
Thus idly slept, and thus ignobly died.’ ”
Girding his loins he gathered from the field,
His quivered stores, his beamy sword and shield,
Harness and saddle-gear were o'er him slung,

Bridle and mail across his shoulders hung;¹
 Then looking round, with anxious eye, to meet,
 The broad impression of his charger's feet;²
 The track he hail'd, and following, onward prest,
 While grief and hope alternate filled his breast.

O'er vale and wild-wood led, he soon descries,
 The regal city's shining turrets rise.
 And when the Champion's near approach is known,
 The usual homage waits him to the throne.
 The King, on foot, received his welcome guest
 With proffered friendship, and his coming blest :
 But Rustem frowned, and with resentment fired,
 Spoke of his wrongs, the plundered steed required.
 "I've traced his footsteps to your royal town,
 Here must he be, protected by your crown ;
 But if retained, if not from fetters freed,
 My vengeance shall o'ertake the felon-deed."

"My honored guest !" the wondering King replied,—
 "Shall Rustem's wants or wishes be denied ?
 But let not anger, headlong, fierce, and blind,
 O'ercloud the virtues of a generous mind.

¹ In this hunting excursion he is completely armed, being supplied with spear, sword, shield, mace, bow and arrows. Like the knight-errants of after times, he seldom even slept unarmed. Single combat and the romantic enterprises of European chivalry may indeed be traced to the East. Rustem was a most illustrious example of all that is pious, disinterested, and heroic. The adventure now describing is highly characteristic of a chivalrous age.

² See the Story of the Horse in Zadig, which is doubtless of Oriental origin. In the upper parts of Hindustan, it is said that the people are exceedingly expert in discovering robbers by tracing the marks of their horses' feet. These mounted robbers are called Kussaks. The Russian *Cossack* is probably derived from the same word.

If still within the limits of my reign,
 The well-known courser shall be thine again :
 For Rakush never can remain concealed,
 No more than Rustom in the battle-field !
 Then cease to nourish useless rage, and share
 With joyous heart my hospitable fare."

The son of Zal now felt his wrath subdued,
 And glad sensations in his soul renewed.
 The ready herald by the King's command,
 Convened the Chiefs and Warriors of the land ;¹
 And soon the banquet social glee restored,
 And China wine-cups glittered on the board ;
 And cheerful song, and music's magic power,
 And sparkling wine, beguiled the festive hour.²
 The dulcet draughts o'er Rustom's senses stole,
 And melting strains absorbed his softened soul.
 But when approached the period of repose,
 All, prompt and mindful, from the banquet rose ;
 A couch was spread well worthy such a guest,
 Perfumed with rose and musk ; and whilst at rest,
 In deep sound sleep, the wearied Champion lay,
 Forgot were all the sorrows of the way.

RUSTEM MEETS TAHMINEH.

One watch had passed, and still sweet slumber shed
 Its magic power around the hero's head —

¹ Thus Alkinoos convenes the chiefs of Phaiakia in honor of Odysseus.

² The original gives to the singers black eyes and cheeks like roses. These women are generally known by the term Lulian, per-

When forth Tahmineh came, — a damsel held
An amber taper, which the gloom dispelled,
And near his pillow stood ; in beauty bright,
The monarch's daughter struck his wondering sight.
Clear as the moon, in glowing charms arrayed.
Her winning eyes the light of heaven displayed ;
Her cypress form entranced the gazer's view,
Her waving curls, the heart, resistless, drew,
Her eyebrows like the Archer's bended bow ;
Her ringlets, snares ; her cheek, the rose's glow,¹
Mixed with the lily, — from her ear-tips hung
Rings rich and glittering, star-like ; and her tongue,
And lips, all sugared sweetness — pearls the while
Sparkled within a mouth formed to beguile.
Her presence dimmed the stars, and breathing round
Fragrance and joy, she scarcely touched the ground,²
So light her step, so graceful — every part
Perfect, and suited to her spotless heart.

Rustum, surprised, the gentle maid addressed,

haps referring to their beauty, as Lulu signifies a pearl, a gem, a jewel; though Lulu is also the name of a people or tribe of Persia.

¹ "Ensnaring ringlets." Thus Shakespeare : —

"Here in her hairs,
The painter plays the Spider — and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes!"

MERCHANT OF VENICE, iii. 2.

² Beauty and fragrance are amongst the poets inseparable. The Persians exceed even the Greeks in their love of perfume, though Anacreon thought it so indispensable a part of beauty, that in directing the Rhodian artist to paint the mistress of his heart, he wishes even her fragrance to be portrayed.

And asked what lovely stranger broke his rest.
 "What is thy name," he said, — "what dost thou seek
 Amidst the gloom of night? Fair vision speak!"
 "O thou," she softly sigh'd, "of matchless fame!
 With pity hear, Tahmineh is my name!
 The pangs of love my anxious heart employ,
 And flattering promise long-expected joy;
 No curious eye has yet these features seen,
 My voice unheard, beyond the sacred screen.¹
 How often have I listened with amaze,
 To thy great deeds, enamoured of thy praise;
 How oft from every tongue I've heard the strain,
 And thought of thee — and sighed, and sighed again.
 The ravenous eagle, hovering o'er his prey,
 Starts at thy gleaming sword and flies away:
 Thou art the slayer of the Demon brood,
 And the fierce monsters of the echoing wood.
 Where'er thy mace is seen, shrink back the bold,
 Thy javelin's flash all tremble to behold.
 Enchanted with the stories of thy fame,
 My fluttering heart responded to thy name;
 And whilst their magic influence I felt,
 In prayer for thee devotedly I knelt;
 And fervent vowed, thus powerful glory charms,
 No other spouse should bless my longing arms.²

¹ As a proof of her innocence Tahmineh declares to Rustem, "No person has ever seen me out of my private chamber, or even heard the sound of my voice."

² Josephus has recorded that the king's daughter betrayed the city of Saba, in Ethiopia, into the hands of Moses, having become enamoured of him by seeing from the walls the valor and bravery

Indulgent heaven propitious to my prayer,
Now brings thee hither to reward my care.
Turan's dominions thou hast sought, alone,
By night, in darkness — thou, the mighty one !
O claim my hand, and grant my soul's desire ;
Ask me in marriage of my royal sire ;
Perhaps a boy our wedded love may crown,
Whose strength like thine may gain the world's renown.
Nay more — for Samengan will keep my word,—
Rakush to thee again shall be restored."

The damsel thus her ardent thought expressed,
And Rustem's heart beat joyous in his breast,
Hearing her passion — not a word was lost,
And Rakush safe, by him still valued most ;
He called her near ; with graceful step she came,
And marked with throbbing pulse his kindled flame.

THE MARRIAGE.

And now a Mubid, from the Champion-knight,
Requests the royal sanction to the rite ;
O'erjoyed, the King the honored suit approves,
O'erjoyed to bless the doting child he loves,
And happier still, in showering smiles around,
To be allied to warrior so renowned.
When the delighted father, doubly blest,
Resigned his daughter to his glorious guest,

which he displayed at the head of the Egyptian army. Dido was won by the celebrity of Æneas. Kotzebue has drawn Elvira enamoured of the fame and glory of Pizarro.

The lovely Desdemona affords another instance.

The people shared the gladness which it gave,
 The union of the beauteous and the brave.
 To grace their nuptial day — both old and young,
 The hymeneal gratulations sung :
 “ May this young moon bring happiness and joy,
 And every source of enmity destroy.”
 The marriage-bower received the happy pair,
 And love and transport shower’d their blessings there.

Ere from his lofty sphere the morn had thrown
 His glittering radiance, and in splendor shone,
 The mindful Champion, from his sinewy arm,
 His bracelet drew, the soul-ennobling charm ;
 And, as he held the wondrous gift with pride,
 He thus address’d his love-devoted bride !

“ Take this,” he said, “ and if, by gracious heaven,
 A daughter for thy solace should be given,
 Let it among her ringlets be displayed,
 And joy and honor will await the maid ;
 But should kind fate increase the nuptial joy,
 And make thee mother of a blooming boy,
 Around his arm this magic bracelet bind,
 To fire with virtuous deeds his ripening mind ;
 The strength of Sam will nerve his manly form,
 In temper mild, in valor like the storm ;
 His not the dastard fate to shrink, or turn
 From where the lions of the battle burn ;
 To him the soaring eagle from the sky
 Will stoop, the bravest yield to him, or fly ;
 Thus shall his bright career imperious claim
 The well-won honors of immortal fame ! ”

Ardent he said, and kissed her eyes and face,
And lingering held her in a fond embrace.

When the bright sun his radiant brow displayed,
And earth in all its loveliest hues arrayed,
The Champion rose to leave his spouse's side,
The warm affections of his weeping bride.
For her, too soon the winged moments flew,
Too soon, alas ! the parting hour she knew ;
Clasped in his arms, with many a streaming tear,
She tried, in vain, to win his deafen'd ear ;
Still tried, ah fruitless struggle ! to impart,
The swelling anguish of her bursting heart.

The father now with gratulations due
Rustum approaches, and displays to view
The fiery war-horse, — welcome as the light
Of heaven, to one immersed in deepest night ;
The Champion, wild with joy, fits on the rein,
And girds the saddle on his back again ;
Then mounts, and leaving sire and wife behind,
Onward to Sistan rushes like the wind.

But when returned to Zabul's friendly shade,
None knew what joys the Warrior had delayed ;
Still, fond remembrance, with endearing thought,
Oft to his mind the scene of rapture brought.

THE BIRTH OF SOHRAB.

When nine slow-circling months had roll'd away,
Sweet-smiling pleasure hailed the brightening day —
A wondrous boy Tahmineh's tears supprest,

And lull'd the sorrows of her heart to rest ;
To him, predestined to be great and brave,
The name Sohrab his tender mother gave ;
And as he grew, amazed, the gathering throng,
View'd his large limbs, his sinews firm and strong ;
His infant years no soft endearment claimed :
Athletic sports his eager soul inflamed ;
Broad at the chest and taper round the loins,
Where to the rising hip the body joins ;
Hunter and wrestler ; and so great his speed,
He could o'ertake, and hold the swiftest steed.
His noble aspect, and majestic grace,
Betrayed the offspring of a glorious race.
How, with a mother's ever anxious love,
Still to retain him near her heart she strove !
For when the father's fond inquiry came,
Cautious, she still concealed his birth and name,
And feign'd a daughter born, the evil fraught
With misery to avert — but vain the thought ;
Not many years had passed, with downy flight,
Ere he, Tahmineh's wonder and delight,
With glistening eye, and youthful ardor warm,
Filled her foreboding bosom with alarm.
“ O now relieve my heart ! ” he said, “ declare,
From whom I sprang and breathe the vital air.
Since, from my childhood, I have ever been,
Amidst my playmates of superior mien ;
Should friend or foe demand my father's name,
Let not my silence testify my shame !
If still concealed, you falter, still delay,

A mother's blood shall wash the crime away."

"This wrath forego," the mother answering cried,

"And joyful hear to whom thou art allied.

A glorious line precedes thy destined birth,

The mightiest heroes of the sons of earth.

The deeds of Sam remotest realms admire,

And Zal, and Rustem thy illustrious sire!"

In private, then, she Rustem's letter placed
Before his view, and brought with eager haste
Three sparkling rubies, wedges three of gold,
From Persia sent—"Behold," she said, "behold
Thy father's gifts, will these thy doubts remove
The costly pledges of paternal love!
Behold this bracelet charm, of sovereign power
To baffle fate in danger's awful hour;
But thou must still the perilous secret keep,
Nor ask the harvest of renown to reap;
For when, by this peculiar signet known,
Thy glorious father shall demand his son,
Doomed from her only joy in life to part,
O think what pangs will rend thy mother's heart!—
Seek not the fame which only teems with woe;
Afrasiyab is Rustem's deadliest foe!
And if by him discovered, him I dread,
Revenge will fall upon thy guiltless head."

The youth replied: "In vain thy sighs and tears,
The secret breathes and mocks thy idle fears.
No human power can fate's decrees control,
Or check the kindled ardor of my soul.
Then why from me the bursting truth conceal?

My father's foes even now my vengeance feel ;
Even now in wrath my native legions rise,
And sounds of desolation strike the skies ;
Kaus himself, hurled from his ivory throne,
Shall yield to Rustem the imperial crown,
And thou, my mother, still in triumph seen,
Of lovely Persia hailed the honored queen !
Then shall Turan unite beneath my band,
And drive this proud oppressor from the land !
Father and Son, in virtuous league combined,
No savage despot shall enslave mankind ;
When Sun and Moon o'er heaven resplendent blaze,
Shall little Stars obtrude their feeble rays ? ”

He paused, and then : “ O mother, I must now
My father seek, and see his lofty brow ;
Be mine a horse, such as a prince demands,
Fit for the dusty field, a warrior's hands ;
Strong as an elephant his form should be,
And chested like the stag, in motion free,
And swift as bird, or fish ; it would disgrace
A warrior bold on foot to show his face.”

The mother, seeing how his heart was bent,
His day-star rising in the firmament,
Commands the stables to be searched to find
Among the steeds one suited to his mind ;
Pressing their backs he tries their strength and nerve,
Bent double to the ground their bellies curve ;
Not one, from neighboring plain and mountain brought,
Equals the wish with which his soul is fraught ;
Fruitless on every side he anxious turns,

Fruitless, his brain with wild impatience burns,
But when at length they bring the destined steed,
From Rakush bred, of lightning's winged speed,
Fleet, as the arrow from the bow-string flies,
Fleet, as the eagle darting through the skies,
Rejoiced he springs, and, with a nimble bound,
Vaults in his seat, and wheels the courser round ;
“With such a horse — thus mounted, what remains?
Kaus, the Persian King, no longer reigns !”
High flushed he speaks — with youthful pride elate,
Eager to crush the Monarch's glittering state ;
He grasps his javelin with a hero's might,
And pants with ardor for the field of fight.

Soon o'er the realm his fame expanding spread,
And gathering thousands hasten'd to his aid.
His Grandsire, pleased, beheld the warrior-train
Successive throng and darken all the plain ;
And bounteously his treasures he supplied,
Camels, and steeds, and gold. — In martial pride,
Sohrab was seen — a Grecian helmet graced
His brow — and costliest mail his limbs embraced.

AFRASIYAB'S SCHEME.

Afrasiyab now hears with ardent joy,
The bold ambition of the warrior-boy,
Of him who, perfumed with the milky breath
Of infancy, was threatening war and death,
And bursting sudden from his mother's side,
Had launched his bark upon the perilous tide.

The insidious King sees well the tempting hour,
Favoring his arms against the Persian power,
And thence, in haste, the enterprise to share,
Twelve thousand veterans selects with care ;
To Human and Barman the charge consigns,
And thus his force with Samengan combines ;
But treacherous first his martial chiefs he prest,
To keep the secret fast within their breast :—
“ For this bold youth must not his father know,
Each must confront the other as his foe,—
Such is my vengeance ! With unhallowed rage,
Father and Son shall dreadful battle wage !
Unknown the youth shall Rustem’s force withstand,
And soon o’erwhelm the bulwark of the land.
Rustem removed, the Persian throne is ours,
An easy conquest to confederate powers ;
And then, secured by some propitious snare,
Sohrab himself our galling bonds shall wear.
Or should the Son by Rustem’s falchion bleed,
The father’s horror at that fatal deed,
Will rend his soul, and midst his sacred grief,
Kaus in vain will supplicate relief.”

The tutored Chiefs advance with speed, and bring
Imperial presents to the future king ;
In stately pomp the embassy proceeds ;
Ten loaded camels, ten unrivalled steeds,
A golden crown, and throne, whose jewels bright
Gleam in the sun, and shed a sparkling light.
A letter too the crafty tyrant sends,
And fraudulent thus the glorious aim commends.—

“ If Persia’s spoils invite thee to the field,
 Accept the aid my conquering legions yield ;
 Led by two Chiefs of valor and renown,
 Upon thy head to place the kingly crown.”

Elate with promised fame, the youth surveys
 The regal vest, the throne’s irradiant blaze,
 The golden crown, the steeds, the sumptuous load
 Of ten strong camels, craftily bestowed ;
 Salutes the Chiefs, and views on every side,
 The lengthening ranks with various arms supplied.
 The march begins — the brazen drums resound,¹
 His moving thousands hide the trembling ground ;
 For Persia’s verdant land he wields the spear,
 And blood and havoc mark his groaning rear.²

SOHRAB MEETS HUJIR.

To check the Invader’s horror-spreading course,
 The barrier-fort opposed unequal force ;
 That fort whose walls, extending wide, contained
 The stay of Persia, men to battle trained.
 Soon as Hujir the dusky crowd desried,
 He on his own presumptuous arm relied,
 And left the fort ; in mail with shield and spear,
 Vaunting he spoke, — “ What hostile force is here ?

¹ Kus is a tymbal, or large brass drum, which is beat in the palaces or camps of Eastern princes.

² It appears throughout the *Shah-Nameh* that whenever any army was put in motion, the inhabitants and the country, whether hostile or friendly, were equally given up to plunder and devastation.

“ Everything in their progress was burnt and destroyed.”

What Chieftain dares our warlike realms invade ? ”
 “ And who art thou ? ” Sohrab indignant said,
 Rushing toward him with undaunted look —
 “ Hast thou, audacious ! nerve and soul to brook
 The crocodile in fight, that to the strife
 Singly thou comest, reckless of thy life ? ”
 To this the foe replied — “ A Turk and I
 Have never yet been bound in friendly tie ;
 And soon thy head shall, severed by my sword,
 Gladden the sight of Persia’s mighty lord,
 While thy torn limbs to vultures shall be given,
 Or bleach beneath the parching blast of heaven.”

The youthful hero laughing hears the boast,
 And now by each continual spears are tost,
 Mingling together ; like a flood of fire
 The boaster meets his adversary’s ire ;
 The horse on which he rides, with thundering pace,
 Seems like a mountain moving from its base ;¹
 Sternly he seeks the stripling’s loins to wound,
 But the lance hurtless drops upon the ground ;
 Sohrab, advancing, hurls his steady spear
 Full on the middle of the vain Hujir,
 Who staggers in his seat. With proud disdain
 The youth now flings him headlong on the plain,
 And quick dismounting, on his heaving breast
 Triumphant stands, his Khunjer firmly prest,
 To strike the head off, — but the blow was stayed —

¹ The simile of a moving mountain occurs in the *Iliad*. Hector, with his white plumes, is compared to a moving mountain topped with snow. Book xiii., 754. But Vergil added considerably to this image.

Trembling, for life, the craven boaster prayed.
That mercy granted eased his coward mind,
Though, dire disgrace, in captive bonds confined,
And sent to Human, who amazed beheld
How soon Sohrab his daring soul had quelled.

A WARRIOR MAID.

When Gurd-afrid, a peerless warrior-dame,
Heard of the conflict, and the hero's shame,
Groans heaved her breast, and tears of anger flowed,
Her tulip cheek with deeper crimson glowed ;
Speedful, in arms magnificent arrayed,
A foaming palfrey bore the martial maid ;
The burnished mail her tender limbs embraced,
Beneath her helm her clustering locks she placed ;
Poised in her hand an iron javelin gleamed,
And o'er the ground its sparkling lustre streamed ;
Accoutred thus in manly guise, no eye
However piercing could her sex descry ;
Now, like a lion, from the fort she bends,
And midst the foe impetuously descends ;
Fearless of soul, demands with haughty tone,
The bravest chief, for warlike valor known,
To try the chance of fight. In shining arms,
Again Sohrab the glow of battle warms ;
With scornful smiles, "Another deer !" he cries,
"Come to my victor-toils, another prize !"
The damsel saw his noose insidious spread,
And soon her arrows whizzed around his head ;

With steady skill the twanging bow she drew,
And still her pointed darts unerring flew ;
For when in forest sports she touched the string,
Never escaped even bird upon the wing ;
Furious he burned, and high his buckler held,
To ward the storm, by growing force impell'd ;
And tilted forward with augmented wrath,
But Gurd-afrid aspires to cross his path ;
Now o'er her back the slacken'd bow resounds ;
She grasps her lance, her goaded courser bounds,
Driven on the youth with persevering might —
Unconquer'd courage still prolongs the fight ;
The stripling Chief shields off the threaten'd blow,
Reins in his steed, then rushes on the foe ;
With outstretch'd arm, he bending backward hung,
And, gathering strength, his pointed javelin flung ;
Firm through her girdle belt the weapon went,
And glancing down the polish'd armor rent.
Staggering, and stunned by his superior force,
She almost tumbled from her foaming horse,
Yet unsubdued, she cut the spear in two,
And from her side the quivering fragment drew,
Then gain'd her seat, and onward urged her steed,
But strong and fleet Sohrab arrests her speed : .
Strikes off her helm, and sees — a woman's face,
Radiant with blushes and commanding grace !
Thus undeceived, in admiration lost,
He cries, “ A woman, from the Persian host !
If Persian damsels thus in arms engage,
Who shall repel their warrior's fiercer rage ? ”

Then from his saddle thong—his noose he drew,
 And round her waist the twisted loop he threw,—
 “Now seek not to escape,” he sharply said,
 “Such is the fate of war, unthinking maid !
 And, as such beauty seldom swells our pride,
 Vain thy attempt to cast my toils aside.”

In this extreme, but one resource remained,
 Only one remedy her hope sustained,—
 Expert in wiles each siren-art she knew,
 And thence exposed her blooming face to view ;
 Raising her full black orbs, serenely bright,
 In all her charms she blazed before his sight ;¹
 And thus addressed Sohrab.—“O warrior brave,
 Hear me, and thy imperilled honor save,
 These curling tresses seen by either host,
 A woman conquered, whence the glorious boast ?
 Thy startled troops will know, with inward grief,
 A woman’s arm resists their towering chief,
 Better preserve a warrior’s fair renown,
 And let our struggle still remain unknown,
 For who with wanton folly would expose
 A helpless maid, to aggravate her woes ;
 The fort, the treasure, shall thy toils repay,
 The chief, and garrison, thy will obey,
 And thine the honors of this dreadful day.”

Raptured he gazed, her smiles resistless move
 The wildest transports of ungoverned love.
 Her face disclosed a paradise to view,

¹ Gurd-afrid, engaging Sohrab, is exactly the Clorinda of Tasso engaging Tancred, in the third canto of *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

Eyes like the fawn, and cheeks of rosy hue —
 Thus vanquished, lost, unconscious of her aim,
 And only struggling with his amorous flame,
 He rode behind, as if compelled by fate,
 And heedless saw her gain the castle-gate.

Safe with her friends, escaped from brand and spear,
 Smiling she stands, as if unknown to fear.

— The father now, with tearful pleasure wild,
 Clasps to his heart his fondly-foster'd child ;
 The crowding warriors round her eager bend,
 And grateful prayers to favoring heaven ascend.

Now from the walls, she, with majestic air,
 Exclaims : “ Thou warrior of Turan, forbear !
 Why vex thy soul, and useless strife demand !
 Go, and in peace enjoy thy native land.”

Stern he rejoins : “ Thou beauteous tyrant ! say,
 Though crown'd with charms, devoted to betray,
 When these proud walls, in dust and ruins laid,
 Yield no defence, and thou a captive maid,
 Will not repentance through thy bosom dart,
 And sorrow soften that disdainful heart ? ”

Quick she replied : “ O'er Persia's fertile fields
 The savage Turk in vain his falchion wields ;
 When King Kaus this bold invasion hears,
 And mighty Rustem clad in arms appears !
 Destruction wide will glut the slippery plain,
 And not one man of all thy host remain.
 Alas ! that bravery, high as thine, should meet
 Amidst such promise, with a sure defeat,
 But not a gleam of hope remains for thee,

Thy wondrous valor cannot keep thee free.
Avert the fate which o'er thy head impends,
Return, return, and save thy martial friends ! ”

Thus to be scorned, defrauded of his prey,
With victory in his grasp — to lose the day !
Shame and revenge alternate filled his mind ;
The suburb-town to pillage he consigned,
And devastation — not a dwelling spared ;
The very owl was from her covert scared ;
Then thus : “ Though luckless in my aim to-day,
To-morrow shall behold a sterner fray ;
This fort, in ashes, scattered o'er the plain.”
He ceased — and turned toward his troops again ;
There, at a distance from the hostile power,
He brooding waits the slaughter-breathing hour.

Meanwhile the sire of Gurd-afrid, who now
Governed the fort, and feared the warrior's vow ;
Mournful and pale, with gathering woes opprest,
His distant Monarch trembling thus addrest.
But first invoked the heavenly power to shed
Its choicest blessings o'er his royal head.
“ Against our realm with numerous foot and horse,
A stripling warrior holds his ruthless course.
His lion-breast unequalled strength betrays,
And o'er his mien the sun's effulgence plays :
Sohrab his name ; like Sam Suwar he shows,
Or Rustem terrible amidst his foes.
The bold Hujir lies vanquished on the plain,
And drags a captive's ignominious chain ;
Myriads of troops besiege our tottering wall,

And vain the effort to suspend its fall.
 Haste, arm for fight, this Tartar-power withstand,
 Let sweeping Vengeance lift her flickering brand ;
 Rustem alone may stem the roaring wave,
 And, prompt as bold, his groaning country save.
 Meanwhile in flight we place our only trust,
 Ere the proud ramparts crumble in the dust.”

Swift flies the messenger through secret ways,
 And to the King the dreadful tale conveys,
 Then passed, unseen, in night’s concealing shade,
 The mournful heroes and the warrior maid.

SOHRAB LOVES.

Soon as the sun with vivifying ray,
 Gleams o’er the landscape, and renewes the day ;
 The flaming troops the lofty walls surround,
 With thundering crash the bursting gates resound.
 Already are the captives bound, in thought,
 And like a herd before the conqueror brought ;
 Sohrab, terrific o’er the ruin, views
 His hopes deceived, but restless still pursues.
 An empty fortress mocks his searching eye,
 No steel-clad chiefs his burning wrath defy ;
 No warrior-maid reviving passions warms,
 And soothes his soul with fondly valued charms.
 Deep in his breast he feels the amorous smart,
 And hugs her image closer to his heart.
 “ Alas ! that Fate should thus invidious shroud
 The moon’s soft radiance in a gloomy cloud ;

Should to my eyes such winning grace display,
 Then snatch the enchanter of my soul away !
 A beauteous roe my toils enclosed in vain,
 Now I, her victim, drag the captive's chain ;
 Strange the effects that from her charms proceed,
 I gave the wound, and I afflicted bleed !
 Vanquished by her, I mourn the luckless strife ;
 Dark, dark, and bitter, frowns my morn of life.
 A fair unknown my tortured bosom rends,
 Withers each joy, and every hope suspends."

Impassioned thus Sohrab in secret sighed,
 And sought, in vain, o'ermastering grief to hide.
 Can the heart bleed and throb from day to day,
 And yet no trace its inmost pangs betray ?
 Love scorns control, and prompts the laboring sigh,
 Pales the red lip, and dims the lucid eye ;
 His look alarmed the stern Turanian Chief,
 Closely he mark'd his heart-corroding grief ;¹
 And though he knew not that the martial dame,
 Had in his bosom lit the tender flame ;
 Full well he knew such deep repinings prove,
 The hapless thraldom of disastrous love.
 Full well he knew some idol's musky hair,
 Had to his youthful heart become a snare,
 But still unnoted was the gushing tear,
 Till haply he had gained his private ear :—
 " In ancient times, no hero known to fame,

¹ Literally, Human was not at first aware that Sohrab was wounded in the *liver*. In this organ Oriental as well as the Greek and Roman poets place the residence of love.

Not dead to glory, e'er indulged the flame ;
Though beauty's smiles might charm a fleeting hour,
The heart, unsway'd, repelled their lasting power.
A warrior Chief to trembling love a prey ?
What ! weep for woman one inglorious day ?
Canst thou for love's effeminate control,
Barter the glory of a warrior's soul ?
Although a hundred damsels might be gained,
The hero's heart shall still be free, unchained.
Thou art our leader, and thy place the field
Where soldiers love to fight with spear and shield ;
And what hast thou to do with tears and smiles,
The silly victim to a woman's wiles ?
Our progress, mark ! from far Turan we came,
Through seas of blood to gain immortal fame ;
And wilt thou now the tempting conquest shun,
When our brave arms this Barrier-fort have won ?
Why linger here, and trickling sorrows shed,
Till mighty Kaus thunders o'er thy head !
Till Tus, and Giw, and Gudarz, and Bahram,
And Rustem brave, Feramurz, and Reham,
Shall aid the war ! A great emprise is thine,
At once, then, every other thought resign ;
For know the task which first inspired thy zeal,
Transcends in glory all that love can feel.
Rise, lead the war, prodigious toils require
Unyielding strength, and unextinguished fire ;
Pursue the triumph with tempestuous rage,
Against the world in glorious strife engage,
And when an empire sinks beneath thy sway,

(O quickly may we hail the prosperous day,
The fickle sex will then with blooming charms,
Adoring throng to bless thy circling arms ! ”

SOHRAB'S VOW.

Human's warm speech, the spirit-stirring theme,
Awoke Sohrab from his inglorious dream.
No more the tear his faded cheek bedewed,
Again ambition all his hopes renewed :
Swell'd his bold heart with unforgotten zeal,
The noble wrath which heroes only feel ;
Fiercely he vowed at one tremendous stroke,
To bow the world beneath the tyrant's yoke !
“ Afrasiyab,” he cried, “ shall reign alone,
The mighty lord of Persia's gorgeous throne ! ”

Burning, himself, to rule this nether sphere,
These welcome tidings charmed the despot's ear.
Meantime Kaus, this dire invasion known,
Had called his chiefs around his ivory throne :
There stood Gurgin, and Bahram, and Gushwad,
And Tus, and Giw, and Gudarz, and Ferhad ;
To them he read the melancholy tale,
Gust'hem had written of the rising bale ;
Besought their aid and prudent choice, to form
Some sure defence against the threatening storm.
With one consent they urge the strong request,
To summon Rustom from his rural rest.—
Instant a warrior-delegate they send,
And thus the King invites his patriot-friend,

“ To thee all praise, whose mighty arm alone,
 Preserves the glory of the Persian throne !
 Lo ! Tartar hordes our happy realms invade ;
 The tottering state requires thy powerful aid ;
 A youthful Champion leads the ruthless host,
 His savage country’s widely rumored boast.
 The Barrier-fortress sinks beneath his sway,
 Hujir is vanquished, ruin tracks his way ;
 Strong as a raging elephant in fight,
 No arm but thine can match his furious might.
 Mazinderan thy conquering prowess knew ;
 The Demon-king thy trenchant falchion slew ;
 The rolling heavens, abash’d with fear, behold
 Thy biting sword, thy mace adorned with gold !¹
 Fly to the succor of a King distrest,
 Proud of thy love, with thy protection blest.
 When o’er the nation dread misfortunes lower,
 Thou art the refuge, thou the saving power.
 The chiefs assembled claim thy patriot vows,
 Give to thy glory all that life allows ;
 And while no whisper breathes the direful tale,
 O, let thy Monarch’s anxious prayers prevail.”
 Closing the fragrant page² o’ercome with dread,

¹ “ Thy mace makes the Sun weep, and thy sword inflames the Stars.” (Lit. the planet Venus.) Although this is a strong hyperbole, there are numberless parallel passages containing equally extravagant personification in our own poets.

² The paper upon which the letters of royal and distinguished personages in the East are written is usually perfumed, and covered with curious devices in gold. This was scented with amber. The degree of embellishment is generally regulated according to the rank of the party.

The afflicted King to Giw, the warrior, said :—
“ Go, bind the saddle on thy fleetest horse,
Outstrip the tempest in thy rapid course,
To Rustem swift his country’s woes convey,
Too true art thou to linger on the way ;
Speed, day and night — and not one instant wait,
Whatever hour may bring thee to his gate.”

RUSTEM WARNED.

Followed no pause — to Giw enough was said,
Nor rest, nor taste of food, his speed delayed.
And when arrived where Zabul bowers exhale
Ambrosial sweets and scent the balmy gale,
The sentinel’s loud voice in Rustem’s ear,
Announced a messenger from Persia, near ;
The Chief himself amidst his warriors stood,
Dispensing honors to the brave and good,
And soon as Giw had joined the martial ring,
(The sacred envoy of the Persian King,)
He, with becoming loyalty inspired,
Asked what the monarch, what the state, required ;
But Giw, apart, his secret mission told, —
The written page was speedily unrolled.

Struck with amazement, Rustem — “ Now on earth
A warrior-knight of Sam’s excelling worth ?
Whence comes this hero of the prosperous star ?
I know no Turk renowned, like him, in war ;
He bears the port of Rustem too, ’tis said,
Like Sam, like Nariman, a warrior bred !
He cannot be my son, unknown to me ;

Reason forbids the thought — it cannot be !
 At Samengan, where once affection smiled,
 To me Tahmineh bore her only child,
 That was a daughter ?” Pondering thus he spoke,
 And then aloud — “ Why fear the invader’s yoke ?
 Why trembling shrink, by coward thoughts dismayed,
 Must we not all in dust, at length, be laid ?
 But come, to Nirum’s palace, haste with me,
 And there partake the feast — from sorrow free ;
 Breathe, but awhile — ere we our toils renew,
 And moisten the parched lip with needful dew.
 Let plans of war another day decide,
 We soon shall quell this youthful hero’s pride.
 The force of fire soon flutters and decays
 When ocean, swelled by storms, its wrath displays.
 What danger threatens ! whence the dastard fear !
 Rest, and at leisure share a warrior’s cheer.”

In vain the Envoy prest the Monarch’s grief ;
 The matchless prowess of the stripling chief ;
 How brave Hujir had felt his furious hand ;
 What thickening woes beset the shuddering land.
 But Rustem, still, delayed the parting day,
 And mirth and feasting rolled the hours away ;
 Morn following morn beheld the banquet bright,
 Music and wine prolonged the genial rite ;
 Rapt by the witchery of the melting strain,
 No thought of Kaus touch’d his swimming brain.¹

¹ Four days were consumed in uninterrupted feasting. This seems to have been an ancient practice previous to the commencement of any important undertaking, or at setting out on a journey.

The trumpet's clang, on fragrant breezes borne,
Now loud salutes the fifth revolving morn ;
The softer tones which charmed the jocund feast,
And all the noise of revelry, had ceased,
The generous horse, with rich embroidery deckt,
Whose gilded trappings sparkling light reflect,
Bears with majestic port the Champion brave,
And high in air the victor-banners wave.
Prompt at the martial call, Zuara leads
His veteran troops from Zabul's verdant meads.¹

KAUS ENRAGED.

Ere Rustem had approached his journey's end,
Tus, Gudarz, Gushwad, met their champion-friend,
With customary honors ; pleased to bring
The shield of Persia to the anxious King.
But foaming wrath the senseless monarch swayed ;
His friendship scorned, his mandate disobeyed,
Beneath dark brows o'ershadowing deep, his eye
Red gleaming shone, like lightning through the sky ;
And when the warriors met his sullen view,
Frowning revenge, still more enraged he grew : —
Loud to the Envoy thus he fiercely cried : —
“ Since Rustem has my royal power defied,
Had I a sword, this instant should his head
Roll on the ground ; but let him now be led

¹ Zuara, it will be remembered, was the brother of Rustem, and had the immediate superintendence of the Zabul troops.

Hence, and impaled alive.”¹ Astounded Giw
 Shrunk from such treatment of a knight so true ;
 But this resistance added to the flame,
 And both were branded with revolt and shame ;
 Both were condemned, and Tus, the stern decree
 Received, to break them on the felon tree.
 Could daring insult, thus deliberate given,
 Escape the rage of one to frenzy driven ?
 No, from his side the nerveless Chief was flung,
 Bent to the ground. Away the Champion sprung;
 Mounted his foaming horse, and looking round —
 His boiling wrath thus rapid utterance found : —
 “ Ungrateful King, thy tyrant acts disgrace
 The sacred throne, and more, the human race ;
 Midst clashing swords thy recreant life I saved,
 And am I now by Tus contemptuous braved ?²
 On me shall Tus, shall Kaus dare to frown ?
 On me, the bulwark of the regal crown ?
 Wherefore should fear in Rustom’s breast have birth,
 Kaus, to me, a worthless clod of earth !
 Go, and thyself Sohrab’s invasion stay,

¹ The original is, “ Seize and inflict upon him the punishment of the dar.” According to Burhani-katia, dar is a tree upon which felons are hanged. But the general acceptation of the term is breaking or tearing the body upon a stake.

² In this speech Rustom recounts the services which he had performed for Kaus. He speaks of his conquests in Egypt, China, Hamaveran, Rum, Suksar, and Mazinderan. Thus Achilles boasts of his unrequited achievements in the cause of Greece.

“ I sacked twelve ample cities on the main,
 And twelve lay smoking on the Trojan plain.”

POPE, *Iliad* ix., 328.

Go, seize the plunderers growling o'er their prey !
Wherefore to others give the base command ?
Go, break him on the tree with thine own hand.
Know, thou hast roused a warrior, great and free,
Who never bends to tyrant Kings like thee !
Was not this untired arm triumphant seen,
In Misser, Rum, Mazinderan, and Chin !
And must I shrink at thy imperious nod !
Slave to no Prince, I only bow to God.
Whatever wrath from thee, proud King ! may fall,
For thee I fought, and I deserve it all.
The regal sceptre might have graced my hand,
I kept the laws, and scorned supreme command.
When Kai-kobad on Alberz mountain strayed,
I drew him thence, and gave a warrior's aid ;
Placed on his brows the long-contested crown,
Worn by his sires, by sacred right his own ;
Strong in the cause, my conquering arms prevailed.
Wouldst thou have reign'd had Rustem's valor failed ?
When the White demon raged in battle-fray,
Wouldst thou have lived had Rustem lost the day ? ”
Then to his friends : “ Be wise, and shun your fate,
Fly the wide ruin which o'erwhelms the state ;
The conqueror comes — the scourge of great and small,
And vultures, following fast, will gorge on all.
Persia no more its injured Chief shall view ” —
He said, and sternly from the court withdrew.
 The warriors now, with sad forebodings wrung,
Torn from that hope to which they proudly clung,
On Gudarz rest, to soothe with gentle sway,

The frantic King, and Rustem's wrath allay.
 With bitter grief they wail misfortune's shock,
 No shepherd now to guard the timorous flock.
 Gudarz at length, with boding cares imprest,
 Thus soothed the anger in the royal breast.
 "Say, what has Rustem done, that he should be
 Impaled upon the ignominious tree?
 Degrading thought, unworthy to be bred
 Within a royal heart, a royal head.
 Hast thou forgot when near the Caspian-wave,
 Defeat and ruin had appalled the brave,
 When mighty Rustem struck the dreadful blow,
 And nobly freed thee from the savage foe?
 Did Demons huge escape his flaming brand?
 Their reeking limbs bestrewed the slippery strand.
 Shall he for this resign his vital breath?
 What ! shall the hero's recompense be death?
 But who will dare a threatening step advance,
 What earthly power can bear his withering glance?
 Should he to Zabul fired with wrongs return,
 The plundered land will long in sorrow mourn !
 This direful presage all our warriors feel,
 For who can now oppose the invader's steel ;
 Thus is it wise thy champion to offend,
 To urge to this extreme thy warrior-friend?
 Remember, passion ever scorns control,
 And wisdom's mild decrees should rule a Monarch's
 soul."¹

¹ Literally, " Kings ought to be endowed with judgment and discretion; no advantage can arise from impetuosity and rage."

KAUS RELENTS.

Kaus, relenting, heard with anxious ear,
And groundless wrath gave place to shame and fear ;
“Go then,” he cried, “his generous aid implore,
And to your King the mighty Chief restore !”

When Gudarz rose, and seized his courser’s rein,
A crowd of heroes followed in his train.

To Rustem, now (respectful homage paid),
The royal prayer he anxious thus conveyed.

“The King, repentant, seeks thy aid again,
Grieved to the heart that he has given thee pain ;
But though his anger was unjust and strong,
Thy country still is guiltless of the wrong,
And, therefore, why abandoned thus by thee ?

Thy help the King himself implores through me.”
Rustem rejoined : “ Unworthy the pretence,
And scorn and insult all my recompense ?

Must I be galled by his capricious mood ?
I, who have still his firmest champion stood ?
But all is past, to heaven alone resigned,
No human cares shall more disturb my mind !”

Then Gudarz thus (consummate art inspired
His prudent tongue, with all that zeal required) ;
“ When Rustem dreads Sohrab’s resistless power,
Well may inferiors fly the trying hour !

Gudarz was one of the greatest generals of Persia ; he conquered Judea, and took Jerusalem under the reign of Lohurasp, of the first dynasty of Persia, and sustained many wars against Afrasiyab under the Kings of the second dynasty. He was the father of Giw, who is also celebrated for his valor in the following reigns.

The dire suspicion now pervades us all,
 Thus, unavenged, shall beauteous Persia fall !
 Yet, generous still, avert the lasting shame,
 O, still preserve thy country's glorious fame !
 Or wilt thou, deaf to all our fears excite,
 Forsake thy friends, and shun the pending fight ?
 And worse, O grief ! in thy declining days,
 Forfeit the honors of thy country's praise ?”
 This artful censure set his soul on fire,
 But patriot firmness calm'd his burning ire ;
 And thus he said : “ Inured to war’s alarms,
 Did ever Rustom shun the din of arms ?
 Though frowns from Kaus I disdain to bear,
 My threaten’d country claims a warrior’s care.”
 He ceased, and prudent joined the circling throng,
 And in the public good forgot the private wrong.

From far the King the generous Champion viewed,
 And rising mildly thus his speech pursued : —
 “ Since various tempers govern all mankind,
 Me, nature fashioned of a foward mind ;¹
 And what the heavens spontaneously bestow,
 Sown by their bounty must forever grow.
 The fit of wrath which burst within me, soon
 Shrunk up my heart as thin as the new moon ;²

¹ Kaus, in acknowledging the violence of his disposition, uses a singular phrase : “ When you departed in anger, O Champion ! I repented ; *ashes fell into my mouth.*” A similar metaphor is used in Hindustani : If a person falls under the displeasure of his friend, he says, “ Ashes have fallen into my meat ;” meaning that his happiness is gone.

² This is one of Firdausi’s favorite similes.

“ My heart became as slender as the new moon.”

Else had I deemed thee still my army's boast,
Source of my regal power, beloved the most,
Unequalled. Every day, remembering thee,
I drain the wine cup, thou art all to me ;
I wished thee to perform that lofty part,
Claimed by thy valor, sanctioned by my heart ;
Hence thy delay my better thoughts supprest,
And boisterous passions revelled in my breast ;
But when I saw thee from my Court retire
In wrath, repentance quenched my burning ire.
O, let me now my keen contrition prove,
Again enjoy thy fellowship and love :
And while to thee my gratitude is known,
Still be the pride and glory of my throne.”

Rustem, thus answering, said : “Thou art the King,
Source of command, pure honor’s sacred spring ;
And here I stand to follow thy behest,
Obedient ever — be thy will expressed,
And services required — Old age shall see
My loins still bound in fealty to thee.”

To this the King : “Rejoice we then to-day,
And on the morrow marshal our array.”
The monarch quick commands the feast of joy,
And social cares his buoyant mind employ,
Within a bower, beside a crystal spring,¹

¹ The beautiful arbors referred to in the text are often included within the walls of Eastern palaces. They are fancifully fitted up, and supplied with reservoirs, fountains, and flower trees. These romantic garden pavilions are called “kiosks” in Turkey, and are generally situated upon an eminence near a running stream.

Where opening flowers, refreshing odors fling,
 Cheerful he sits, and forms the banquet scene,
 In regal splendor on the crowded green ;
 And as around he greets his valiant bands,
 Showers golden presents from his bounteous hands ;¹
 Voluptuous damsels trill the sportive lay,
 Whose sparkling glances beam celestial day ;
 Filled with delight the heroes closer join,
 And quaff till midnight cups of generous wine.

Soon as the Sun had pierced the veil of night,
 And o'er the prospect shed his earliest light,
 Kaus, impatient, bids the clarions sound,
 The sprightly notes from hills and rocks rebound ;
 His treasure gates are opened : and to all
 A largess given ; obedient to the call,
 His subjects gathering crowd the mountain's brow,
 And following thousands shade the vales below ;
 With shields, in armor, numerous legends bend ;
 And troops of horse the threatening lines extend.
 Beneath the tread of heroes fierce and strong,
 By war's tumultuous fury borne along,
 The firm earth shook : the dust, in eddies driven,
 Whirled high in air, obscured the face of heaven ;

¹ Milton alludes to the custom in *Paradise Lost* :—

“ Where the gorgeous East with richest hand
 Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

In the note on this passage by Warburton, it is said to have been an Eastern ceremony, at the coronation of their kings, to powder them with *gold-dust* and *seed-pearl*. The expression in Firdausi is, “he showered or scattered gems.” It was usual at festivals, and the custom still exists, to throw money amongst the people.

Nor earth, nor sky appeared — all, seeming lost,
And swallowed up by that wide-spreading host.
The steely armor glittered o'er the fields,
And lightnings flashed from gold emblazoned shields ;
Thou wouldest have said the clouds had burst in showers
Of sparkling amber o'er the martial powers.
Thus, close embodied, they pursued their way,
And reached the Barrier-fort in terrible array.

THE SPY.

The legions of Turan, with dread surprise,
Saw o'er the plain successive myriads rise ;
And showed them to Sohrab ; he, mounting high
The fort, surveyed them with a fearless eye ;
To Human, who, with withering terror pale,
Had marked their progress through the distant vale,
He pointed out the sight, and ardent said :—
“ Dispel these woe-fraught broodings from thy head.
I wage the war, Afrasiyab ! for thee,
And make this desert seem a rolling sea.”
Thus, while amazement every bosom quelled,
Sohrab, unmoved, the coming storm beheld,
And boldly gazing on the camp around,
Raised high the cup with wine nectareous crowned :
O'er him no dreams of woe insidious stole,
No thought but joy engaged his ardent soul.

The Persian legions had restrained their course,
Tents and pavilions, countless foot and horse,
Clothed all the spacious plain, and gleaming threw

Terrific splendors on the gazer's view.
 But when the Sun had faded in the west,
 And night assumed her ebon-colored vest,
 The mighty Chief approached the sacred throne,
 And generous thus made danger all his own :
 "The rules of war demand a previous task,
 To watch this dreadful foe I boldly ask ;
 With wary step the wondrous youth to view,
 And mark the heroes who his path pursue."
 The King assents : "The task is justly thine,
 Favorite of heaven, inspired by power divine."
 In Turkish habit secretly arrayed
 The lurking Champion wandered through the shade,
 And, cautious, standing near the palace gate,
 Saw how the chiefs were ranged in princely state.

What time Sohrab his thoughts to battle turned,
 And for the first proud fruits of conquest burned,
 His mother called a warrior to his aid,
 And Zinda-ruzm his sister's call obeyed.
 To him Tahmineh gave her only joy,
 And bade him shield the bold adventurous boy :
 "But, in the dreadful strife, should danger rise,
 Present my child before his father's eyes !
 By him protected, war may rage in vain,
 Though he may never bless these arms again !"
 This guardian prince sat on the stripling's right,
 Viewing the imperial banquet with delight ;
 Human and Barman, near the hero placed,
 In joyous pomp the full assembly graced ;
 A hundred valiant Chiefs begirt the throne,

And, all elate, were chanting his renown.
Closely concealed, the gay and splendid scene,
Rustum contemplates with astonished mien ;
When Zind, retiring, marks the listener nigh,
Watching the festal train with curious eye ;
And well he knew, amongst his Tartar host,
Such towering stature not a Chief could boast —
“ What spy is here, close shrouded by the night ? ”
Art thou afraid to face the beams of light ? ”
But scarcely from his lips these words had past,
Ere, felled to earth, he groaning breathed his last ;
Unseen he perished, fate decreed the blow,
To add fresh keenness to a parent’s woe.

Meantime Sohrab, perceiving the delay
In Zind’s return, looked round him with dismay ;
The seat still vacant — but the bitter truth,
Full soon was known to the distracted youth ;
Full soon he found that Zinda-ruzm was gone,
His day of feasting and of glory done ;
Speedful toward the fatal spot he ran,
Where slept in bloody vest the slaughtered man.

The lighted torches now displayed the dead,
Stiff on the ground his graceful limbs were spread ;
Sad sight to him who knew his guardian care,
Now doomed a kinsman’s early loss to bear ;
Anguish and rage devour his breast by turns,
He vows revenge, then o’er the warrior mourns :
And thus exclaims to each afflicted Chief : —
“ No time, to-night, my friends, for useless grief ;
The ravenous wolf has watched his helpless prey,

Sprung o'er the fold, and borne its flower away ;
 But if the heavens my lifted arm befriend,
 Upon the guilty shall my wrath descend —
 Unsheathed, this sword shall dire revenge pursue,
 And Persian blood the thirsty land bedew.””
 Frowning he paused, and checked the spreading woe,
 Resumed the feast, and bid the wine-cup flow !

The valiant Giw was sentinel that night,
 And marking dimly by the dubious light,
 A warrior form approach, he claps his hands,
 With naked sword and lifted shield he stands,
 To front the foe ; but Rustem now appears,
 And Giw the secret tale astonished hears ;
 From thence the Champion on the Monarch waits,
 The power and splendor of Sohrab relates :
 “ Circled by Chiefs this glorious youth was seen,
 Of lofty stature and majestic mien ;
 No Tartar region gave the hero birth :
 Some happier portion of the spacious earth ;
 Tall, as the graceful cypress he appears ;
 Like Sam the brave, his warrior-front he rears ! ”
 Then having told how, while the banquet shone,
 Unhappy Zind had sunk, without a groan ;
 He forms his conquering bands in close array,
 And, cheered by wine, awaits the coming day.

SOHRAB QUESTIONS HUJIR.

When now the Sun his golden buckler raised,
 And genial light through heaven diffusive blazed,

Sohrab in mail his nervous limbs attired,
For dreadful wrath his soul to vengeance fired ;
With anxious haste he bent the yielding cord,
Ring within ring, more fatal than the sword ;
Around his brow a regal helm he bound ;
His dappled steed impatient stamp'd the ground.
Thus armed, ascending where the eye could trace
The hostile force, and mark each leader's place,
He called Hujir, the captive Chief addressed,
And anxious thus, his soul's desire expressed :
“ A prisoner thou, if freedom's voice can charm,
And dungeon darkness fill thee with alarm,
That freedom merit, shun severest woe,
And truly answer what I ask to know !
If rigid truth thy ready speech attend,
Honors and wealth shall dignify my friend.”

“ Obedient to thy wish,” Hujir replied :
“ Truth thou shalt hear, whatever chance betide ;
For what on earth to praise has better claim ?
Falsehood but leads to sorrow and to shame ! ”

“ Then say, what heroes lead the adverse host,
Where they command, what dignities they boast ;
Say, where does Kaus hold his kingly state,¹
Where Tus, and Gudarz, on his bidding wait ;
Giw, Gust'hem, and Bahram — all known to thee,
And where is mighty Rustem, where is he ?
Look round with care, their names and power display,
Or instant death shall end thy vital day.”

¹ Similar descriptions of chiefs and encampments are common amongst the epic poets of the West.

“Where yonder splendid tapestries extend,¹
 And o'er pavilions bright infolding bend,
 A throne triumphal shines with sapphire rays,
 And golden suns upon the banners blaze ;
 Full in the centre of the hosts — and round
 The tent a hundred elephants are bound,
 As if, in pomp, he mocked the power of fate ;
 There royal Kaus holds his kingly state.

“In yonder tent which numerous guards protect,
 Where front and rear illustrious Chiefs collect ;
 Where horsemen wheeling seem prepared for fight,
 Their golden armor glittering in the light ;
 Tus lifts his banners, decked with royal pride,
 Feared by the brave, the soldier's friend and guide.²

“That crimson tent where spearmen frowning stand,
 And steel-clad veterans form a threatening band,
 Holds mighty Gudarz, famed for martial fire,
 Of eighty valiant sons the valiant sire ;
 Yet strong in arms, he shuns inglorious ease,
 His lion-banners floating in the breeze.”

“But mark, that green pavilion ; girt around
 By Persian nobles, speaks the Chief renowned ;
 Fierce on the standard, worked with curious art,
 A hideous dragon writhing seems to start ;

¹ The tents and pavilions of Eastern princes were exceedingly magnificent; they were often made of silks and velvets, and ornamented with pearls and gold. The tent of Nadir Shah was made of scarlet and broadcloth, and lined with satin, richly figured over with precious stones.

² The banners were adorned with the figure of an elephant, to denote his royal descent.

Throned in his tent the warrior's form is seen,
Towering above the assembled host between !¹
A generous horse before him snorts and neighs,
The trembling earth the echoing sound conveys.
Like him no Champion ever met my eyes,
No horse like that for majesty and size ;
What Chief illustrious bears a port so high ?
Mark, how his standard flickers through the sky !”

Thus ardent spoke Sohrab. Hujir dismayed,
Paused ere reply the dangerous truth betrayed.
Trembling for Rustem's life the captive groaned ;
Basely his country's glorious boast disowned,
And said the Chief from distant China came —
Sohrab abrupt demands the hero's name ;
The name unknown, grief wrings his aching heart,
And yearning anguish speeds her venom'd dart ;
To him his mother gave the tokens true,
He sees them all, and all but mock his view.
When gloomy fate descends in evil hour,
Can human wisdom bribe her favoring power ?
Yet, gathering hope, again with restless mien
He marks the Chiefs who crowd the warlike scene.

“ Where numerous heroes, horse and foot, appear,
And brazen trumpets thrill the listening ear,
Behold the proud pavilion of the brave !
With wolves embossed the silken banners wave.

¹ Thus in Homer : —

“ The king of kings majestically tall,
Towers o'er his armies and outshines them all.”
POPE, *Iliad*, ii., 483.

The throne's bright gems with radiant lustre glow,
 Slaves ranked around with duteous homage bow.
 What mighty Chieftain rules his cohorts there?
 His name and lineage, free from guile, declare ! ”

“ Giw, son of Gudarz, long a glorious name,
 Whose prowess even transcends his father's fame.”¹

“ Mark yonder tent of pure and dazzling white,
 Whose rich brocade reflects a quivering light ;
 An ebon seat surmounts the ivory throne ;
 There frowns in state a warrior of renown.
 The crowding slaves his awful nod obey,
 And silver moons around his banners play ;
 What Chief, or Prince, has grasped the hostile sword ? ”
 “ Fraburz, the son of Persia's mighty lord.”

Again : “ These standards shew one champion more,
 Upon their centre flames the savage boar ; ”²
 The saffron-hued pavilion bright ascends,
 Whence many a fold of tasselled fringe depends ;
 Who there presides ? ”

“ Guraz, from heroes sprung,
 Whose praise exceeds the power of mortal tongue.”

Thus, anxious, he explored the crowded field,
 Nor once the secret of his birth revealed ;³

¹ The text says that he was also the son-in-law of Rustem.

² The word Guraz signifies a wild boar, but this acceptation is not very accordant to Mussulman notions, and consequently it is not supposed, by the orthodox, to have that meaning in the text. It is curious that the name of the warrior, Guraz, should correspond with the bearings on the standard. This frequently obtains in the heraldry of Europe.

³ Firdausi considers this to be destiny! It would have been natural in Sohrab to have gloried in the fame of his father, but from

Heaven willed it so. Pressed down by silent grief,
Surrounding objects promised no relief.
This world to mortals still denies repose,
And life is still the scene of many woes.
Again his eye, instinctive turned, descried
The green pavilion, and the warrior's pride.
Again he cries : " O tell his glorious name ;
Yon gallant horse declares the hero's fame ! "
But false Hujir the aspiring hope repelled,
Crushed the fond wish, the soothing balm withheld,
" And why should I conceal his name from thee ?
His name and title are unknown to me."

Then thus Sohrab — " In all that thou hast said,
No sign of Rustem have thy words conveyed ;
Thou sayest he leads the Persian host to arms,
With him has battle lost its boisterous charms ?
Of him no trace thy guiding hand has shewn ;
Can power supreme remain unmarked, unknown ? "

" Perhaps returned to Zabul's verdant bowers,
He undisturbed enjoys his peaceful hours,
The vernal banquets may constrain his stay,
And rural sports invite prolonged delay."

" Ah ! say not thus ; the Champion of the world,
Shrink from the kindling war with banners furled ! ¹

an inevitable dispensation, his lips are here sealed on that subject ; and he inquires of Rustem as if he only wanted to single him out for the purpose of destroying him. The people of Persia are all fatalists.

¹ The continued anxiety and persevering filial duty of Sohrab are described with great success. The case is unparalleled. Sohrab is dark and mysterious, and, as Firdausi says in another place, the unconscious promoter of his own destruction.

It cannot be ! Say where his lightnings dart,
 Shew me the warrior, all thou know'st impart ;
 Treasures uncounted shall be thy reward,
 Death changed to life, my friendship more than shared.
 Dost thou not know what, in the royal ear,
 The Mubid said — befitting Kings to hear ?
 ‘ Untold, a secret is a jewel bright,
 Yet profitless whilst hidden from the light ;
 But when revealed, in words distinctly given,
 It shines resplendent as the sun through heaven.’ ”

To him, Hujir evasive thus replies : —
 “ Through all the extended earth his glory flies !
 Wherever dangers round the nation close,
 Rustem approaches, and repels its foes ;
 And shouldst thou see him mix in mortal strife,
 Thou’dst think ’twere easier to escape with life
 From tiger fell, or demon — or the fold
 Of the chafed dragon, than his dreadful hold —
 When fiercest battle clothes the fields with fire,
 Before his rage embodied hosts retire ! ”

“ And where didst thou encountering armies see ?
 Why Rustem’s praise so proudly urge to me ?
 Let us but meet and thou shalt trembling know,
 How fierce that wrath which bids my bosom glow :
 If living flames express his boundless ire,
 O’erwhelming waters quench consuming fire !
 And deepest darkness, glooms of ten-fold night,
 Fly from the piercing beams of radiant light.”

Hujir shrunk back with undissembled dread,
 And thus communing with himself, he said : —

“ Shall I, regardless of my country, guide
To Rustem’s tent this furious homicide?
And witness there destruction to our host?
The bulwark of the land forever lost !
What Chief can then the Tartar power restrain !
Kaus dethroned, the mighty Rustem slain !
Better a thousand deaths should lay me low,
Than, living, yield such triumph to the foe.
For in this struggle should my blood be shed,
No foul dishonor can pursue me, dead ;
No lasting shame my father’s age oppress,
Whom eighty sons of martial courage bless !¹
They for their brother slain, incensed will rise,
And pour their vengeance on my enemies.”
Then thus aloud : “ Can idle words avail ?
Why still of Rustem urge the frequent tale ?
Why for the elephant-bodied hero ask ?

Thee, he will find, — no uncongenial task.
Why seek pretences to destroy my life ?
Strike, for no Rustem views th’ unequal strife ! ”

Sohrab confused, with hopeless anguish mourned,
Back from the lofty walls he quick returned,
And stood amazed.

THE WAR BEGINS.

Now war and vengeance claim,
Collected thought and deeds of mighty name ;

¹ Hujir was the son of Gudarz. A family of the extent mentioned in the text is not of rare occurrence amongst the princes of the

The jointed mail his vigorous body clasps,
 His sinewy hand the shining javelin grasps ;
 Like a mad elephant he meets the foe,
 His steed a moving mountain — deeply glow
 His cheeks with passionate ardor, as he flies
 Resistless onward, and with sparkling eyes,
 Full on the centre drives his daring horse — ¹
 The yielding Persians fly his furious course ;
 As the wild ass impetuous springs away,
 When the fierce lion thunders on his prey.
 By every sign of strength and martial power,
 They think him Rustem in his direst hour ;
 On Kaus now his proud defiance falls,
 Scornful to him the stripling warrior calls :
 “ And why art thou misnamed of royal strain ?
 What work of thine befits the tented plain ?
 This thirsty javelin seeks thy coward breast ;
 Thou and thy thousands doomed to endless rest.
 True to my oath, which time can never change,
 On thee, proud King ! I hurl my just revenge.
 The blood of Zind inspires my burning hate,
 And dire resentment hurries on thy fate ;
 Whom canst thou send to try the desperate strife ?
 What valiant Chief, regardless of his life ?
 Where now can Fraburz, Tus, Giw, Gudarz, be,
 And the world-conquering Rustem, where is he ? ”

East. The King of Persia had, in 1809, according to Mr. Morier, “ *sixty-five sons!* ” As the Persians make no account of females, it is not known how many daughters he had.

¹ The Kulub-gah is the centre or heart of the army, where the sovereign or chief of the troops usually remains.

No prompt reply from Persian lip ensued,—
Then rushing on, with demon-strength endued,
Sohrab elate his javelin waved around,
And hurled the bright pavilion to the ground ;
With horror Kaus feels destruction nigh,
And cries : “ For Rustem’s needful succor fly !

“ This frantic Turk, triumphant on the plain,
Withers the souls of all my warrior-train.”

That instant Tus the mighty Champion sought,
And told the deeds the Tartar Chief had wrought ;
“ ‘Tis ever thus, the brainless Monarch’s due !

Shame and disaster still his steps pursue !”

This saying, from his tent he soon descried,
The wild confusion spreading far and wide ;
And saddled Rakush — whilst, in deep dismay,
Girgin incessant cried : “ Speed, speed, away.”
Reham bound on the mace, Tus promptly ran,
And buckled on the broad Burgustuhan.

Rustem, meanwhile, the thickening tumult hears
And in his heart, untouched by human fears,
Says : “ What is this, that feeling seems to stun !
This battle must be led by Ahriman,¹

The awful day of doom must have begun.”

In haste he arms, and mounts his bounding steed,
The growing rage demands redoubled speed ;
The leopard’s skin he o’er his shoulders throws,
The regal girdle round his middle glows.²

¹ Ahriman, a demon, the principle of evil.

² This girdle was the gift of the king, as a token of affection and gratitude. Jonathan gives to David, among other things, his girdle : “ Because he loved him as his own soul.” 1 Samuel xviii. 3, 4.

High wave his glorious banners ; broad revealed,
 The pictured dragons glare along the field
 Born by Zuara. When, surprised, he views
 Sohrab, endued with ample breast and thews,
 Like Sam Suwar, he beckons him apart ;
 The youth advances with a gallant heart,
 Willing to prove his adversary's might,
 By single combat to decide the fight ;
 And eagerly, " Together brought," he cries,
 " Remote from us be foemen, and allies,
 And though at once by either host surveyed,
 Ours be the strife which asks no mortal aid."

Rustem, considerate, viewed him o'er and o'er,
 So wondrous graceful was the form he bore,
 And frankly said : " Experience flows with age,
 And many a foe has felt my conquering rage ;
 Much have I seen, superior strength and art
 Have borne my spear thro' many a demon's heart ;
 Only behold me on the battle plain,
 Wait till thou see'st this hand the war sustain,
 And if on thee should changeful fortune smile,
 Thou needst not fear the monster of the Nile !¹
 But soft compassion melts my soul to save,
 A youth so blooming with a mind so brave ! "

The generous speech Sohrab attentive heard,
 His heart expanding glowed at every word :
 " One question answer, and in answering shew,
 That truth should ever from a warrior flow ;

¹ A crocodile in war, with Firdausi, is a figure of great power and strength.

Art thou not Rustem, whose exploits sublime,
Endear his name thro' every distant clime?"

"I boast no station of exalted birth,
No proud pretensions to distinguished worth ;
To him inferior, no such powers are mine,
No offspring I of Nirum's glorious line!"¹

The prompt denial dampt his filial joy,
All hope at once forsook the Warrior-boy,
His opening day of pleasure, and the bloom
Of cherished life, immersed in shadowy gloom.
Perplexed with what his mother's words implied ; —
A narrow space is now prepared, aside,
For single combat. With disdainful glance
Each boldly shakes his death-devoting lance,
And rushes forward to the dubious fight ;
Thoughts high and brave their burning souls excite ;
Now sword to sword ; continuous strokes resound,
Till glittering fragments strew the dusty ground.
Each grasps his massive club with added force,²
The folding mail is rent from either horse ;
It seemed as if the fearful day of doom
Had, clothed in all its withering terrors, come.
Their shattered corselets yield defence no more —
At length they breathe, defiled with dust and gore ;
Their gasping throats with parching thirst are dry,

¹ It is difficult to account for this denial of his name, as there appears to be no equivalent cause. But all the famous heroes described in the *Shah-Nameh* are as much distinguished for their address and cunning as their bravery.

² The original is Umud, which appears to have been a weapon made of iron. Umud also signifies a column, a beam.

Gloomy and fierce they roll the lowering eye,
And frown defiance. Son and Father driven
To mortal strife ! are these the ways of Heaven ?
The various swarms which boundless ocean breeds,
The countless tribes which crop the flowery meads,
All know their kind, but hapless man alone
Has no instinctive feeling for his own !
Compelled to pause, by every eye surveyed,
Rustem, with shame, his wearied strength betrayed ;
Foiled by a youth in battle's mid career,
His groaning spirit almost sunk with fear ;
Recovering strength, again they fiercely meet ;
Again they struggle with redoubled heat ;
With bended bows they furious now contend ;
And feathered shafts in rattling showers descend ;
Thick as autumnal leaves they strew the plain,
Harmless their points, and all their fury vain.
And now they seize each other's girdle-band ;
Rustem, who, if he moved his iron hand,
Could shake a mountain, and to whom a rock
Seemed soft as wax, tried, with one mighty stroke,
To hurl him thundering from his fiery steed,
But Fate forbids the gallant youth should bleed ;
Finding his wonted nerves relaxed, amazed
That hand he drops which never had been raised
Uncrowned with victory, even when demons fought,
And pauses, wildered with despairing thought.
Sohrab again springs with terrific grace,
And lifts, from saddle-bow, his ponderous mace ;
With gathered strength the quick-descending blow

Wounds in its fall, and stuns the unwary foe ;
Then thus contemptuous : “ All thy power is gone ;
Thy charger’s strength exhausted as thy own ;
Thy bleeding wounds with pity I behold ;
O seek no more the combat of the bold ! ”

Rustem to this reproach made no reply,
But stood confused — meanwhile, tumultuously
The legions closed ; with soul-appalling force,
Troop rushed on troop, o’erwhelming man and horse ;
Sohrab, incensed, the Persian host engaged,
Furious along the scattered lines he raged ;
Fierce as a wolf he rode on every side,
The thirsty earth with streaming gore was dyed.
Midst the Turanians, then, the Champion sped,
And like a tiger heaped the fields with dead.
But when the Monarch’s danger struck his thought,
Returning swift, the stripling youth he sought ;
Grieved to the soul, the mighty Champion viewed
His hands and mail with Persian blood imbrued ;
And thus exclaimed with lion-voice : “ O say,
Why with the Persians dost thou war to-day ?
Why not with me alone decide the fight,
Thou’rt like a wolf that seek’st the fold by night.”

To this Sohrab his proud assent expressed —
And Rustem, answering, thus the youth addressed.
“ Night-shadows now are thickening o’er the plain,
The morrow’s sun must see our strife again ;
In wrestling let us then exert our might ! ”
He said, and eve’s last glimmer sunk in night.

Thus as the skies a deeper gloom displayed,

The stripling's life was hastening into shade !

The gallant heroes to their tents retired,
The sweets of rest their wearied limbs required :
Sohrab, delighted with his brave career,
Describes the fight in Human's anxious ear :
Tells how he forced unnumbered Chiefs to yield,
And stood himself the victor of the field !

" But let the morrow's dawn," he cried, " arrive,
And not one Persian shall the day survive ;
Meanwhile let wine its strengthening balm impart,
And add new zeal to every drooping heart."
The valiant Giw with Rustem pondering stood,
And, sad, recalled the scene of death and blood ;
Grief and amazement heaved the frequent sigh,
And almost froze the crimson current dry.

Rustem, oppressed by Giw's desponding thought,
Amidst his Chiefs the mournful Monarch sought ;
To him he told Sohrab's tremendous sway,

The dire misfortunes of this luckless day ;
Told with what grasping force he tried, in vain,
To hurl the wondrous stripling to the plain :
" The whispering zephyr might as well aspire
To shake a mountain — such his strength and fire.
But night came on — and, by agreement, we
Must meet again to-morrow — who shall be
Victorious, Heaven knows only — for by Heaven,
Victory or death to man is ever given."

This said, the King, o'erwhelmed in deep despair,
Passed the dread night in agony and prayer.

The Champion, silent, joined his bands at rest,

And spurned at length despondence from his breast ;
Removed from all, he cheered Zuara's heart,
And nerved his soul to bear a trying part : —
“ Ere early morning gilds the ethereal plain,
In martial order range my warrior-train ;
And when I meet in all his glorious pride,
This valiant Turk whom my late rage defied,
Should misfortune's smiles my arduous task requite,
Bring them to share the triumph of my might ;
But should success the stripling's arm attend,
And dire defeat and death my glories end,
To their loved homes my brave associates guide ;
Let bowery Zabul all their sorrows hide —
Comfort my venerable father's heart ;
In gentlest words my heavy fate impart.
The dreadful tidings to my mother bear,¹
And soothe her anguish with the tenderest care ;
Say, that the will of righteous Heaven decreed,
That thus in arms her mighty son should bleed.
Enough of fame my various toils acquired,
When warring demons, bathed in blood, expired.
Were life prolonged a thousand lingering years,
Death comes at last and ends our mortal fears ;
Kirshasp, and Sam, and Nariman, the best
And bravest heroes, who have ever blest
This fleeting world, were not endued with power,
To stay the march of fate one single hour ;
The world for them possessed no fixed abode,

¹ In the East, peculiarly strong attachment to the mother is universal.

The path to death's cold regions must be trod ;
 Then, why lament the doom ordained for all ?
 Thus Jemshid fell, and thus must Rustem fall."

RUSTEM DECEIVES SOHRAB.

When the bright dawn proclaimed the rising day,
 The warriors armed, impatient of delay ;
 But first Sohrab, his proud confederate nigh,
 Thus wistful spoke, as swelled the boding sigh —
 " Now, mark my great antagonist in arms !
 His noble form my filial bosom warms ;
 My mother's tokens shine conspicuous here,
 And all the proofs my heart demands, appear ;
 Sure this is Rustem, whom my eyes engage !
 Shall I, O grief ! provoke my Father's rage ?
 Offended Nature then would curse my name,
 And shuddering nations echo with my shame."
 He ceased, then Human : " Vain, fantastic thought,
 Oft have I been where Persia's Champion fought ;
 And thou hast heard what wonders he performed,
 When, in his prime, Mazinderan was stormed ;
 That horse resembles Rustem's, it is true,
 But not so strong, nor beautiful to view."

Sohrab now buckles on his war-attire,
 His heart all softness, and his brain all fire ;
 Around his lips such smiles benignant played,
 He seemed to greet a friend, as thus he said :—
 " Here let us sit together on the plain,
 Here, social sit, and from the fight refrain ;

Ask we from heaven forgiveness of the past,
And bind our souls in friendship that may last ;
Ours be the feast — let us be warm and free,
For powerful instinct draws me still to thee ;
Fain would my heart in bland affection join,
Then let thy generous ardor equal mine ;
And kindly say, with whom I now contend —
What name distinguished boasts my warrior-friend !
Thy name unfit for champion brave to hide,
Thy name so long, long sought, and still denied ;
Say, art thou Rustem, whom I burn to know ?
Ingenuous say, and cease to be my foe ! ”

Sternly the mighty Champion cried, “ Away, —
Hence with thy wiles — now practised to delay ;
The promised struggle, resolute, I claim,
Then cease to move me to an act of shame.”
Sohrab rejoined — “ Old man ! thou wilt not hear
The words of prudence uttered in thine ear ;
Then, Heaven ! look on.”

Preparing for the shock,

Each binds his charger to a neighboring rock ;
And girds his loins, and rubs his wrists, and tries
Their suppleness and force, with angry eyes ;
And now they meet — now rise, and now descend,
And strong and fierce their sinewy arms extend ;
Wrestling with all their strength they grasp and strain,
And blood and sweat flow copious on the plain ;
Like raging elephants they furious close ;
Committal wounds are given, and wrenching blows.
Sohrab now claps his hands, and forward springs

Impatiently, and round the Champion clings ;
Seizes his girdle belt, with power to tear
The very earth asunder ; in despair
Rustem, defeated, feels his nerves give way,
And thundering falls. Sohrab bestrides his prey :
Grim as the lion, prowling through the wood,
Upon a wild ass springs, and pants for blood.
His lifted sword had lopt the gory head,
But Rustem, quick, with crafty ardor said :—
“One moment, hold ! what, are our laws unknown ?
A Chief may fight till he is twice o’erthrown ;
The second fall, his recreant blood is spilt,
These are our laws, avoid the menaced guilt.”

Proud of his strength, and easily deceived,
The wondering youth the artful tale believed ;
Released his prey, and, wild as wind or wave,
Neglecting all the prudence of the brave,
Turned from the place, nor once the strife renewed,
But bounded o’er the plain and other cares pursued,
As if all memory of the war had died,
All thoughts of him with whom his strength was tried.

Human, confounded at the stripling’s stay,
Went forth, and heard the fortune of the day ;
Amazed to find the mighty Rustem freed,
With deepest grief he wailed the luckless deed.
“ What ! loose a raging lion from the snare,
And let him growling hasten to his lair ?
Bethink thee well ; in war, from this unwise,
This thoughtless act what countless woes may rise ;
Never again suspend the final blow,

Nor trust the seeming weakness of a foe ! ”¹
“ Hence with complaint,” the dauntless youth replied,
To-morrow’s contest shall his fate decide.”

When Rustem was released, in altered mood
He sought the coolness of the murmuring flood ;
There quenched his thirst ; and bathed his limbs, and
prayed,

Beseeching Heaven to yield its strengthening aid.
His pious prayer indulgent Heaven approved,
And growing strength through all his sinews moved ;²
Such as erewhile his towering structure knew,
When his bold arm unconquered demons slew.
Yet in his mien no confidence appeared,
No ardent hope his wounded spirits cheered.

THE DEATH OF SOHRAB.

Again they met. A glow of youthful grace,
Diffused its radiance o’er the stripling’s face,
And when he saw in renovated guise,
The foe so lately mastered ; with surprise,
He cried : “ What ! rescued from my power, again
Dost thou confront me on the battle plain ?
Or, dost thou, wearied, draw thy vital breath,

¹ Thus also Sa’di : “ Knowest thou what Zal said to Rustem the Champion ? Never calculate upon the weakness or insignificance of an enemy.”

² Rustem is as much distinguished for piety as bravery. Every success is attributed by him to the favor of Heaven. In the achievement of his labors in the Heft-Khan, his devotion is constant, and he everywhere justly acknowledges that power and victory are derived from God alone.

And seek, from warrior bold, the shaft of death?
 Truth has no charms for thee, old man ; even now,
 Some further cheat may lurk upon thy brow ;
 Twice have I shewn thee mercy, twice thy age
 Hath been thy safety — twice it soothed my rage.”
 Then mild the Champion : “ Youth is proud and vain !
 The idle boast a warrior would disdain ;
 This aged arm perhaps may not control,
 The wanton fury that inflames thy soul ! ”

Again, dismounting, each the other viewed
 With sullen glance, and swift the fight renewed ;
 Clenched front to front, again they tug and bend,
 Twist their broad limbs as every nerve would rend ;
 With rage convulsive Rustem grasps him round ;
 Bends his strong back, and hurls him to the ground ;
 Him, who had deemed the triumph all his own ;
 But dubious of his power to keep him down,
 Like lightning quick he gives the deadly thrust,
 And spurns the Stripling weltering in the dust.
 — Thus as his blood that shining steel imbrues,
 Thine too shall flow, when Destiny pursues ;¹
 For when she marks the victim of her power,

¹ The expression in the original is remarkable. “ Assuredly, as thou hast thirsted for blood, Destiny will also thirst for thine, and the very hairs upon thy body will become daggers to destroy thee.” This passage is quoted in the preface to the *Shah Nameh*, collated by order of Bayisunghur Khan, as the production of the poet Unsari. Unsari was one of the seven poets whom Mahmud appointed to give specimens of their powers in versifying the history of the kings of Persia. In compliment to Mahmud, perhaps Firdausi ingrafted them on his own poem, or more probably they have been interpolated since.

A thousand daggers speed the dying hour.
Writhing with pain Sohrab in murmurs sighed —
And thus to Rustem — “ Vaunt not, in thy pride ;
Upon myself this sorrow have I brought,
Thou but the instrument of fate — which wrought
My downfall ; thou art guiltless — guiltless quite ;
O ! had I seen my father in the fight,
My glorious father ! Life will soon be o'er,
And his great deeds enchant my soul no more !
Of him my mother gave the mark and sign,
For him I sought, and what an end is mine !
My only wish on earth, my constant sigh,
Him to behold, and with that wish I die.
But hope not to elude his piercing sight,
In vain for thee the deepest glooms of night ;
Couldst thou through Ocean's depths for refuge fly,
Or midst the star-beams track the upper sky !
Rustum, with vengeance armed, will reach thee there,
His soul the prey of anguish and despair.”

An icy horror chills the Champion's heart,
His brain whirls round with agonizing smart ;
O'er his wan cheek no gushing sorrows flow,
Senseless he sinks beneath the weight of woe ;
Relieved at length, with frenzied look, he cries :
“ Prove thou art mine, confirm my doubting eyes !
For I am Rustem ! ” Piercing was the groan,
Which burst from his torn heart — as wild and lone,
He gazed upon him. Dire amazement shook
The dying youth, and mournful thus he spoke : —
“ If thou art Rustem, cruel is thy part,

No warmth paternal seems to fill thy heart ;
 Else hadst thou known me when, with strong desire,
 I fondly claimed thee for my valiant sire ;
 Now from my body strip the shining mail,
 Untie these bands, ere life and feeling fail ;
 And on my arm the direful proof behold !
 Thy sacred bracelet of resplendent gold !
 When the loud brazen drums were heard afar,
 And, echoing round, proclaimed the pending war,
 Whilst parting tears my mother's eyes o'erflowed,
 This mystic gift her bursting heart bestowed :
 'Take this,' she said, 'thy father's token wear,
 And promised glory will reward thy care.'
 The hour is come, but fraught with bitterest woe,
 We meet in blood to wail the fatal blow."

The loosened mail unfolds the bracelet bright,
 Unhappy gift ! to Rustem's wildered sight ;
 Prostrate he falls — " By my unnatural hand,
 My son, my son is slain — and from the land
 Uprooted." Frantic, in the dust his hair
 He rends in agony and deep despair ;
 The western sun had disappeared in gloom,
 And still the Champion wept his cruel doom ;
 His wondering legions marked the long delay,
 And, seeing Rakush riderless astray,
 The rumor quick to Persia's Monarch spread,
 And there described the mighty Rustem dead.
 Kaus, alarmed, the fatal tidings hears ;
 His bosom quivers with increasing fears.
 " Speed, speed, and see what has befallen to-day

To cause these groans and tears — what fatal fray !
If he be lost, if breathless on the ground,
And this young warrior, with the conquest crowned —
Then must I, humbled, from my kingdom torn,
Wander like Jemshid, through the world forlorn.”¹

The army roused, rushed o'er the dusty plain,
Urged by the Monarch to revenge the slain ;
Wild consternation saddened every face,
Tus winged with horror sought the fatal place,
And there beheld the agonizing sight, —
The murderous end of that unnatural fight.
Sohrab, still breathing, hears the shrill alarms,
His gentle speech suspends the clang of arms :
“ My light of life now fluttering sinks in shade,
Let vengeance sleep, and peaceful vows be made.
Beseech the King to spare this Tartar host,
For they are guiltless, all to them is lost ;
I led them on, their souls with glory fired,
While mad ambition all my thoughts inspired.
In search of thee, the world before my eyes,
War was my choice, and thou the sacred prize ;
With thee, my sire ! in virtuous league combined,
No tyrant King should persecute mankind.
That hope is past — the storm has ceased to rave —
My ripening honors wither in the grave ;
Then let no vengeance on my comrades fall,
Mine was the guilt, and mine the sorrow, all ;
How often have I sought thee — oft my mind

¹ Jemshid's glory and misfortunes are the constant theme of admiration and reflection amongst the poets of Persia.

Figured thee to my sight—o'erjoyed to find
 My mother's token ; disappointment came,
 When thou deniedst thy lineage and thy name ;
 Oh ! still o'er thee my soul impassioned hung,
 Still to my Father fond affection clung !
 But fate, remorseless, all my hopes withstood,
 And stained thy reeking hands in kindred blood."

His faltering breath protracted speech denied :
 Still from his eyelids flowed a gushing tide ;
 Through Rustem's soul redoubled horror ran,
 Heartrending thoughts subdued the mighty man.
 And now, at last, with joy-illumined eye,
 The Zabul bands their glorious Chief descry ;
 But when they saw his pale and haggard look,
 Knew from what mournful cause he gazed and shook,
 With downcast mien they moaned and wept aloud ;
 While Rustem thus addressed the weeping crowd :
 "Here ends the war ! let gentle peace succeed,
 Enough of death, I—I have done the deed !"
 Then to his brother, groaning deep, he said :—
 "O what a curse upon a parent's head !
 But go—and to the Tartar say—no more,
 Let war between us steep the earth with gore."
 Zuara flew and wildly spoke his grief,
 To crafty Human, the Turanian Chief,
 Who, with dissembled sorrow, heard him tell
 The dismal tidings which he knew too well ;
 "And who," he said, "has caused these tears to flow ?
 Who, but Hujir? He might have stayed the blow ;
 But when Sohrab his Father's banners sought,

He still denied that here the Champion fought ;
He spread the ruin, he the secret knew,
Hence should his crime receive the vengeance due ! ”
Zuara, frantic, breathed in Rustem’s ear,
The treachery of the captive Chief, Hujir ;
Whose headless trunk had weltered on the strand ;
But prayers and force withheld the lifted hand.
Then to his dying son the Champion turned,
Remorse more deep within his bosom burned ;
A burst of frenzy fired his throbbing brain ;
He clenched his sword, but found his fury vain ;
The Persian Chiefs the desperate act represt,
And tried to calm the tumult in his breast :
Thus Gudarz spoke : “ Alas ! wert thou to give
Thyself a thousand wounds, and cease to live ;
What would it be to him thou sorrowest o’er ?
It would not save one pang — then weep no more ;
For if removed by death, O say, to whom
Has ever been vouchsafed a different doom ?
All are the prey of death — the crowned, the low,
And man, through life, the victim still of woe.”
Then Rustem : “ Fly ! and to the King relate,
The pressing horrors which involve my fate ;
And if the memory of my deeds e’er swayed
His mind, O supplicate his generous aid ;
A sovereign balm he has whose wondrous power,
All wounds can heal, and fleeting life restore ;¹
Swift from his tent the potent medicine bring.”

¹ The Hindus, in their books on medicine, talk of drugs for the recovery of the dead !

— But mark the malice of the brainless King !
 Hard as the flinty rock, he stern denies
 The healthful draught, and gloomy thus replies : —
 “ Can I forgive his foul and slanderous tongue ?
 The sharp disdain on me contemptuous flung ?
 Scorned midst my army by a shameless boy,
 Who sought my throne, my sceptre to destroy !
 Nothing but mischief from his heart can flow ;
 Is it, then, wise to cherish such a foe ?
 The fool who warms his enemy to life,
 Only prepares for scenes of future strife.”

Gudarz, returning, told the hopeless tale —
 And thinking Rustem’s presence might prevail,
 The Champion rose, but ere he reached the throne,
 Sohrab had breathed the last expiring groan.

RUSTEM’S GRIEF.

Now keener anguish racked the father’s mind,
 Reft of his son, a murderer of his kind ;
 His guilty sword distained with filial gore,
 He beat his burning breast, his hair he tore ;
 The breathless corse before his shuddering view,
 A shower of ashes o’er his head he threw ;¹
 “ In my old age,” he cried, “ what have I done ?
 Why have I slain my son, my innocent son !

¹ Scattering ashes over the head is a very ancient mode of expressing grief. Thus 2 Samuel iii. 31: “ And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner.” Also, xiii. 16: “ And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment.”

Why o'er his splendid dawning did I roll
The clouds of death,—and plunge my burthened soul
In agony? My son! from heroes sprung;
Better these hands were from my body wrung;
And solitude and darkness, deep and drear,
Fold me from sight than hated linger here.
But when his mother hears, with horror wild,
That I have shed the life-blood of her child,
So nobly brave, so dearly loved, in vain,
How can her heart that rending shock sustain?"

Now on a bier the Persian warriors place
The breathless Youth, and shade his pallid face;
And turning from that fatal field away,
Move toward the Champion's home in long array.
Then Rustem, sick of martial pomp and show,
Himself the spring of all this scene of woe,
Doomed to the flames the pageantry he loved,¹
Shield, spear, and mace, so oft in battle proved;
Now lost to all, encompassed by despair;
His bright pavilion crackling blazed in air;
The sparkling throne the ascending column fed;
In smoking fragments fell the golden bed;
The raging fire red glimmering died away,
And all the Warrior's pride in dust and ashes lay.

Kaus, the King, now joins the mournful Chief,
And tries to soothe his deep and settled grief;
For soon or late we yield our vital breath,
And all our worldly troubles end in death!

¹ I know nothing of the kind in any of our epic or dramatic poets superior to this fine burst of agonized feeling and remorse.

“ When first I saw him, graceful in his might,
 He looked far other than a Tartar knight ;
 Wondering I gazed — now Destiny has thrown
 Him on thy sword — he fought, and he is gone ;
 And should even Heaven against the earth be hurled,
 Or fire inwrap in crackling flames the world,
 That which is past — we never can restore,
 His soul has travelled to some happier shore.
 Alas ! no good from sorrow canst thou reap,
 Then wherefore thus in gloom and misery weep ? ”

But Rustem’s mighty woes disdained his aid,
 His heart was drowned in grief, and thus he said : —
 “ Yes, he is gone ! to me forever lost !
 O then protect his brave unguided host ;
 From war removed and this detested place,
 Let them, unharmed, their mountain-wilds retrace ;
 Bid them secure my brother’s will obey,
 The careful guardian of their weary way.¹
 To where the Jihun’s distant waters stray.”
 To this the King : “ My soul is sad to see
 Thy hopeless grief — but, since approved by thee,
 The war shall cease — though the Turanian brand
 Has spread dismay and terror through the land.”

The King, appeased, no more with vengeance burned,
 The Tartar legions to their homes returned ;
 The Persian warriors, gathering round the dead,
 Grovelled in dust, and tears of sorrow shed ;
 Then back to loved Iran their steps the monarch led.

¹ Zuara conducted the troops of Afrasiyab across the Jihun. Rustem remained on the field of battle till his return.

SOHRAB TAKEN HOME.

But Rustem, midst his native bands, remained,
And further rites of sacrifice maintained ;
A thousand horses bled at his command,
And the torn drums were scattered o'er the sand ;
And now through Zabul's deep and bowery groves,
In mournful pomp the sad procession moves.
The mighty Chief on foot precedes the bier ;
His Warrior-friends, in grief assembled near :
The dismal cadence rose upon the gale,
And Zal astonished heard the piercing wail ;
He and his kindred joined the solemn train ;
Hung round the bier and wondering viewed the slain.
"There gaze, and weep !" the sorrowing Father said,
"For there, behold my glorious offspring dead !"
The hoary Sire shrunk backward with surprise,
And tears of blood o'erflowed his aged eyes ;
And now the Champion's rural palace gate
Receives the funeral group in gloomy state ;
Rudabeh loud bemoaned the Stripling's doom ;
Sweet flower, all drooping in the hour of bloom,
His tender youth in distant bowers had past,
Sheltered at home he felt no withering blast ;
In the soft prison of his mother's arms,
Secure from danger and the world's alarms.
O ruthless Fortune ! flushed with generous pride,
He sought his sire, and thus unhappy, died.
Rustum again the sacred bier unclosed ;
Again Sohrab to public view exposed ;

Husbands, and wives, and warriors, old and young,
 Struck with amaze, around the body hung,
 With garments rent and loosely flowing hair ;
 Their shrieks and clamors filled the echoing air ;
 Frequent they cried : “Thus Sam the Champion slept !
 Thus sleeps Sohrab !” Again they groaned, and wept.

Now o'er the corpse a yellow robe is spread,
 The aloes bier is closed upon the dead ;
 And, to preserve the hapless hero's name,
 Fragrant and fresh, that his unblemished fame
 Might live and bloom through all succeeding days,
 A mound sepulchral on the spot they raise,
 Formed like a charger's hoof.

In every ear

The story has been told — and many a tear,
 Shed at the sad recital. Through Turan,
 Afrasiyab's wide realm, and Samengan,
 Deep sunk the tidings ; — nuptial bower, and bed,
 And all that promised happiness, had fled !

THE MOTHER'S GRIEF.

But when Tahmineh heard this tale of woe,
 Think how a mother bore the mortal blow !¹
 Distracted, wild, she sprang from place to place ;
 With frenzied hands deformed her beauteous face ;
 The musky locks her polished temples crowned,

¹ It would appear that Human, on his return, sent to Tahmineh the war-horse, armor, and everything belonging to her unfortunate son.

Furious she tore, and flung upon the ground ;
Starting, in agony of grief, she gazed,—
Her swimming eyes to Heaven imploring raised ;
And groaning cried : “ Sole comfort of my life !
Doomed the sad victim of unnatural strife,
Where art thou now with dust and blood defiled ?
Thou darling boy, my lost, my murdered child !
When thou wert gone — how, night and lingering day,
Did thy fond mother watch the time away ;
For hope still pictured all I wished to see,
Thy father found, and thou returned to me,
Yes — thou, exulting in thy father’s fame !
And yet, nor sire nor son, nor tidings, came :
How could I dream of this ? ye met — but how ?
That noble aspect — that ingenuous brow,
Moved not a nerve in him — ye met — to part,
Alas ! the life-blood issuing from the heart.
Short was the day which gave to me delight,
Soon, soon, succeeds a long and dismal night ;
On whom shall now devolve my tender care ?
Who, loved like thee, my bosom-sorrows share ?
Whom shall I take to fill thy vacant place,
To whom extend a mother’s soft embrace ?
Sad fate ! for one so young, so fair, so brave,
Seeking thy father thus to find a grave.
These arms no more shall fold thee to my breast,
No more with thee my soul be doubly blest ;
No, drowned in blood thy lifeless body lies,
Forever torn from these desiring eyes ;
Friendless, alone, beneath a foreign sky,

Thy mail thy death-clothes — and thy father, by ;
Why did not I conduct thee on the way,
And point where Rustem's bright pavilion lay ?
Thou hadst the tokens — why didst thou withhold
Those dear remembrances — that pledge of gold ?
Hadst thou the bracelet to his view restored,
Thy precious blood had never stained his sword.”

The strong emotion choked her panting breath,
Her veins seemed withered by the cold of death :
The trembling matrons hastening round her mourned,
With piercing cries, till fluttering life returned ;
Then gazing up, distraught, she wept again,
And frantic, seeing midst her pitying train,
The favorite steed — now more than ever dear,
The hoofs she kissed, and bathed with many a tear ;
Clasping the mail Sohrab in battle wore,
With burning lips she kissed it o'er and o'er ;
His martial robes she in her arms comprest,
And like an infant strained them to her breast ;
The reins, and trappings, club, and spear, were brought,
The sword, and shield, with which the Stripling fought,
These she embraced with melancholy joy,
In sad remembrance of her darling boy.
And still she beat her face, and o'er them hung,
As in a trance — or to them wildly clung —
Day after day she thus indulged her grief,
Night after night, disdaining all relief ;
At length worn out — from earthly anguish riven,
The mother's spirit joined her child in Heaven.



OMAR KHAYYAM.

THERE is probably no Persian poet so well known to-day as this so-called Eastern Voltaire, and that he should here occupy the place usually assigned to Anwari simply demonstrates Omar's own philosophy, that no one of us knows of how little importance we are after all. In spite, however, of this philosophy, Omar, in the last half-century, owing to Fitzgerald's matchless translation, has been read from East to West. Even in the Rocky Mountains of America a frontiersman, born and bred in that region, was heard¹ to quote the following verse : —

" 'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrash
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest."

Ghias ud-Din Abul Fath' Umar bin Ibrahim, better known as Omar Khayyam, was born at Naishapur, in Khorasan, somewhere between 1017 and 1050, and he certainly lived into the twelfth century. The only story of his boyhood is the following, which is probably legendary.

Omar had two intimate school friends. These young men while studying at Naishapur each promised the other that if, in after years, any one of them became famous he would share his prosperity with his less fortunate friends. Years rolled on. One of them did become famous, Nizam-ul-Mulk becoming the Prime Minister to Sultan Alp Arslan²;

¹ See the Hon. John Hay's speech before the Omar Khayyam Club of London, December 8, 1897.

² "Alp Arslan was the son of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble successor of Mahmud the Great and

and faithful to his promise he gave a government position to his friend Hasan ben Sabah, who later tried to supplant his benefactor, but was unsuccessful and was publicly disgraced, after which he became the head of a set of Persian fanatics called Ismailians, who, under his evil chieftainship, were the terror of the early Crusaders. He was known as the "Chief of the Assassins." Ultimately "one of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizam-ul-Mulk, the old schoolboy friend." And what was Nizam-ul-Mulk's gift to Omar? A pension that he might have solitude; it was all the poet asked, solitude in which to devote his time to mathematics, astronomy, and poetry. His Arabic treatise on algebra has been translated into French, and Gibbon says of the calendar which he and seven of his mathematical contemporaries worked out, that it is a "computation of time which surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." Nevertheless, it never went into effect.

Omar had the Oriental love for roses,—and he is reported to have said, "My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it." And it was; for one of his pupils tells us that "Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishapur, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so that the stone was hidden under them."

Omar took his takhallus, or poetical name, of Khayyam, which means tent-maker, from this trade, which he or his father is said to have at one time followed. This Persian custom of taking a takhallus is adopted by almost all of these poets, because they introduce their name into their ghazels or poems, usually toward the end; and as the

founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades." — FITZGERALD.

proper name seldom sounds well in verse they choose a desirable one.

The Sufis, a sect two centuries old at this time, claim this philosopher as one of them, although during Omar's lifetime they feared his ridicule and hated his honesty which scorned to disguise his doubts under their veil of mysticism. Indeed Omar says :¹ —

" If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead :
That One for Two I never did mis-read."

Still his countrymen find in his epigrammatic verses an esoteric meaning he never meant. The Sufis interpret their Persian poets very much as the Songs of Solomon have been interpreted by the Christians. But Omar's scepticism was real enough ; it belonged to the age of religious darkness in which he lived. Christianity to him meant the Crusades.

He, like Hafiz, sang of "woman, wine, and song." but he also pulled hard at the knotted threads of life which taught him this : —

" And this I know : whether the One True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,
One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright."

His idea of contentment we find in the following as rendered by Emerson : —

" On earth's wide thoroughfares below
Two only men contented go :
Who knows what's right and what's forbid,
And he from whom is knowledge hid."

Westerners seem almost jealous for this Oriental. They resent the fact that a narrow Eastern province should

¹ Bodleian Quatrain.

claim this astronomer-poet as belonging exclusively to itself ; they say he belongs to the world !

Certainly reparation has been made to Omar and his famous translator, Fitzgerald, since the days when a discouraged bookseller in London threw the bulk of the first edition into a box outside his shop to sell for “a penny apiece.” Here they were found by Rossetti and Swinburne, and now copies of this first edition cannot be bought for a hundred dollars. From such obscurity this Eastern singer has risen into a positive cult, with an *Omar Khayyam Club* in London, organized in 1892, and one recently started in Boston called the *Omar Khayyam Club of America*.

When one glances at the list of translators of this Persian genius and also the different editions of his *Rubaiyat*, one can apprehend how true it seems that —

“There's not a sage but has gone mad for thee.”

SELECTIONS FROM THE RUBAIYAT.¹

I.

THE sun has cast on wall and roof his net of burning light,
The lordly day fills high the cup to speed the parting
night ;

“Wake !” cries in silver accents the herald of the dawn ;
“Arise and drink ! the darkness flies — the morning rises
bright.”

2.

The rosy dawn shines through the tavern door,
And cries, “Wake ! slumbering reveller, and pour !

¹ Anonymous, but accredited to E. A. Johnson.

For ere my sands of life be all run out,
I fain would fill my jars with wine once more."

3.

To-morrow rank and fame for none may be,
So for to-day thy weary soul set free ;
Drink with me, love, once more beneath the moon ;
She oft may shine again, but not on thee and me.

4.

If wine and song there be to give thee soul-entrancing
bliss,
If there be spots where verdant fields and purling brook-
lets kiss,
Ask thou no more from Providence, nor turn thee in
despair ;
If there be any paradise for man, 'tis even this.

5.

Thy ruby lip pours fragrance unto mine,
Thine eye's deep chalice bids me drink thy soul ;
As yonder crystal goblet brims with wine,
So in thy tear the heart's full tide doth roll.

6.

What reck we that our sands run out in Balkh or Babylon,
Or bitter be the draught or sweet, so once the draught
is done.
Drink then thy wine with me, for many a silver moon
Shall wax and wane when thou and I are gone.

7.

To those who know the truth, what choice of foul or fair
 Where lovers rest ; though 'twere in Hell, for them 'tis
 Heaven there.

What recks the Dervish that he wears sackcloth or satin
 sheen,
 Or lovers that beneath their heads be rocks or pillows
 fair.

8.

O Love ! chief record of the realms of truth,
 The chiefest couplet in the ode of youth !
 Oh, thou who knowest not the world of love,
 Learn this, that life is love, and love is ruth.

9.

Though with the rose and rosy wine I dwell,
 Yet time to me no tale of joy doth tell ;
 My days have brought no sign of hopes fulfilled ;
 'Tis past ! the phantoms fly, and breaks the spell.

10.

Though sweet the rose, yet sorely wounds the thorn ;
 Though deep we drink to-night, we rue the morn ;
 And though a thousand years were granted, say,
 Were it not hard to wait the last day's dawn ?

11.

As sweeps the plain the hurrying wind, as flows the rip-
 pling stream,

So yesterday from our two lives has passed and is a dream ;
And while I live, these to my soul shall bring nor hope, nor dread,
The morrow that may never come, the yesterday that fled.

12.

Oh, joy in solitude ! of thee well may the poet sing ;
Woe worth the heart that owns no soil wherein that flower may spring ;
For when wassail sinks in wailing and traitor friends are gone,
Proudly through vacant hall the sturdy wanderer's step shall ring.

13.

If grief be the companion of thy heart,
Brood not o'er thine own sorrows and their smart ;
Behold another's woe, and learn thereby
How small thine own, and comfort thy sad heart.

14.

Oh, swiftly came the winter wind, and swiftly hurried past ;
So madly sought my longing soul the rest she found at last ;
Now faint and weak as weakness' self, she waits but for the end ;
The bowl is broke, the wine remains, but on the ground is cast.

15.

Through the unknown life's first dark day my soul
 Did seek the tablet and the pen, and Paradise and Hell
 Then read the teacher from his mystic scroll ;
 Tablet and pen are in thine hand, and so are Heaven
 and Hell.

16.

Hast seen the world? All thou hast seen is naught,
 All thou hast said, all thou hast heard or wrought :
 Sweep the horizon's verge from pole to pole, 'tis vain ;
 Even all thou hast in secret done is naught.

17.

The Architect of heaven's blue dome and Ruler of the
 wave
 In many a grief-laden heart doth deeper plunge the
 glaive,
 And gathers many a silken tress and many a ruby lip
 To fill his puppet-show, the world, and his chibouque,
 the grave.

18.

Though I be formed of water and of clay,
 And with the ills of life content for aye,
 Ever thou bid'st me shun the joyful cup.
 My hand is empty : wherefore bid'st me stay?

19.

Much have I wandered over vale and plain,
 Through many climes, in joy, in grief and pain,

Yet never heard men say “The traveller
Who passed this way has now returned again.”

20.

Lo, blood of men slain by the stroke of doom !
Lo, dust of men strewn on the face of earth !
Oh, take what life may give of youth and mirth ;
Full many an opening bud shall never bloom.

21.

Drink ! for thou soon shalt sleep within the tomb,
Nor friend nor foe shall break the eternal gloom.
Beware ! and tell to none his secret dark, —
The faded rose may never hope to bloom.

22.

Fill high the cup though ache the weary brow ;
Fill with the wine that doth with life endow,
For life is but a tale by watch-fire told.
Haste thee ! the fire burns low — the night grows old !

NIZAMI.

NIZAMI,¹ the first great romantic poet of Persia, was born 1141 A.D. at Ganja in Arran, now the Russian town of Elizabethpol. His life was devoted to asceticism, mainly due to the religious atmosphere of Ganja, the inhabitants of which were Sunnites, who allowed no one to remain in their city who was not of their faith. As a recluse Nizami had the reputation for the most rigid sanctity. Ata Beg wished to test the piety of this poet, so with great display he visited him in his humble retreat, hoping by such magnificence to tempt Nizami to return with him to court. But it was a fruitless journey, and Ata Beg returned filled with the most profound veneration for this really sincere poet.

Nizami, whose poetical genius has been ranked next to that of Firdausi, did not publish his first work until he was nearly forty years old. This work was called *The Storehouse of Mysteries*, and was a result of his meditations on God and man. Following this, appeared the *Khosru and Shirin*, a Persian romance with historical foundation. In appreciation of his genius he is said to have received an estate consisting of fourteen villages. His *Divan*, supposed to have consisted of twenty thousand verses, came out about 1188, followed by the famous love story of *Laili and Majnum*, which he is said to have written in four months, and which shows his remarkable power in depicting human passions. Reading Firdausi's *Shah-Nameh* gave him the idea of writing his *Alexander Book*, an epic divided into two parts, showing Alexander, first as conqueror, and second as prophet,

¹ Nizam-ud-din Abu Muhammad Ilyas ben Yusuf.

philosopher, and traveller. In his last book, the *Seven Fair Faces*, he returned to romantic fiction; for this book consists of seven stories told to the Sassanian king, Bahram Gor, by his seven favorite wives. These works together form the *Five Treasures of Nizami*.

The poet's masterpiece is the famous Bedouin love story of *Laili and Majnun*, which is so frequently compared to Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and is the *Romeo and Juliet* of the East. France has its Abelard and Eloise, Italy its Petrarch and Laura, and Persia and Arabia have this pure, pathetic romance,—a romance which the Orientals consider the personification of faithful love.

If he had been a Sufi, we should say that *Laili and Majnun* might be meant to depict the passion of the soul in its progress to eternity, or to represent the "reciprocal affection of the body and the soul."¹

According to one admirer, the character of the poet justifies any spiritual interpretation of this poem, and it is a well-known fact that in the *Masnavi* and *Odes* of Hafiz the names of Laili and Majnun seem to be used for the Omnipresent Spirit of God.²

Sa'di has written of Nizami's genius, and Hafiz says of him :—

" Not all the treasured store of ancient days
Can equal the sweetness of Nizami's lays."

THE LOVES OF LAILI AND MAJNUN.³

I.

SAKI,⁴ thou know'st I worship wine ;
Let that delicious cup be mine.

¹ Horace Hayman Wilson, late Sanskrit scholar at Oxford.

² Sir William Jones.

³ Translated by Mr. James Atkinson.

⁴ Saki, cup-bearer.

Wine ! pure and limpid as my tears,
Dispeller of a lover's fears ;
With thee inspired, with thee made bold,
'Midst combat fierce my post I hold ;
With thee inspired, I touch the string,
And, rapt, of love and pleasure sing.
Thou art a lion, seeking prey,
Along the glades where wild deer stray ;
And like a lion I would roam,
To bring the joys I seek for home ;
With wine, life's dearest, sweetest treasure,
I feel the thrill of every pleasure :
— Bring, Saki, bring thy ruby now ;
Its lustre sparkles on thy brow,
And, flashing with a tremulous light,
Has made thy laughing eyes more bright.
Bring, bring the liquid gem, and see
Its power, its wondrous power, in me.
— No ancestors have I to boast ;
The trace of my descent is lost.
From Adam what do I inherit ?
What but a sad and troubled spirit ?
For human life, from oldest time,
Is ever marked with guilt and crime ;
And man, betrayer and betrayed,
Lurks like a spider in the shade ;
But wine still plays a magic part,
Exalting high the drooping heart.
Then, Saki, linger not, but give
The blissful balm on which I live.

Come, bring the juice of the purple vine,
Bring, bring the musky-scented wine ;
A draught of wine the memory clears,
And wakens thoughts of other years.—
When blushing dawn illumes the sky,
Fill up a bumper, fill it high !
That wine which to the fevered lip,
With anguish parched, when given to sip,
Imparts a rapturous smile, and throws
A veil¹ o'er all distracting woes :
That wine, the lamp which, night and day,
Lights us along our weary way ;
Which strews the path with fruit and flowers,
And gilds with joy our fleeting hours ;
And lifts the mind, now grown elate,
To Jemshid's² glory, Jemshid's state.—
But of the kingly race beware ;
'Tis not for thee their smiles to share :
Smiles are deceitful, fire looks bright,
And sheds a lucid, dazzling light ;
But, though attractive, it is known
That safety dwells in flight alone.
The moth the taper's radiance tries,
But 'midst the flame in torment dies :
And none lament that foolish pride
Which seeks to be with kings allied.—
Bring, bring the musky-scented wine !

¹ The Nepenthe of Homer.

² The story of Jemshid, one of the early rulers of Persia, is finely told in the *Shah-Nameh*.

The key of mirth ! it must be mine ;
 The key which opens wide the door
 Of rapture's rich and varied store ;
 Which makes the mounting spirits glad,
 And feel the pomp of Kai-Kobad.
 Wine o'er the temper casts a spell
 Of kindness indescribable :
 Then, since I'm in the drinking vein,
 Bring, bring the luscious wine again !
 From the vintner bring a fresh supply,
 And let not the reveller's lips be dry.—
 Come, Saki, thou art not old, nor lame ;
 Thou'dst not incur from a minstrel blame ;
 Let him wash from his heart the dust of sorrow ;
 And riot in social bliss till the morrow ;
 Let the sound of the goblet delight his ear,
 Like the music that breathes from Heaven's own
 sphere.

II.

LAILI.

Mark, where instruction pours upon the mind
 The light of knowledge, simple or refined ;
 Shaikhs of each tribe have children there, and each
 Studies whate'er the bearded sage can teach.
 Thence his attainments Kais¹ assiduous drew,
 And scattered pearls from lips of ruby hue ;

¹Kais was the original name of the lover, afterward called Majnun, in consequence of the madness produced by his passion.

And there, of different tribe and gentle mien,
A lovely maid of tender years was seen :
Her mental powers an early bloom displayed ;
Her graceful form in simple garb arrayed :
Bright as the morn, her cypress shape, and eyes
Dark as the stag's, were viewed with fond surprise ;
And when her cheek this Arab moon revealed,
A thousand hearts were won ; no pride, no shield,
Could check her beauty's power, resistless grown,
Given to enthrall and charm — but chiefly one.
Her richly flowing locks were black as night,
And Laili¹ she was called — that heart's delight :
One single glance the nerves to frenzy wrought,
One single glance bewildered every thought ;
And, when o'er Kais affection's blushing rose
Diffused its sweetness, from him fled repose :
Tumultuous passion danced upon his brow ;
He sought to woo her, but he knew not how :
He gazed upon her cheek, and, as he gazed,
Love's flaming taper more intensely blazed.
Soon mutual pleasure warm'd each other's heart ;
Love conquer'd both — they never dreamt to part ;

¹ Laili, in Arabic, signifies night; the name, however, has been referred to her color, and she is accused of possessing no beauty but in the eyes of her lover, being short in stature, and dark in complexion. A poet is said to have addressed her, saying: "Art thou the person for whom Kais lost his reason? I do not see that thou art so beautiful." "Silence!" she said, "*thou art not Majnun.*" Another observed to Majnun, "Laili is not surpassing in beauty; what occasions this adoration?" "Thou dost not see Laili with my eyes!" was his brief reply. According to Nizami and history, Laili not only existed in reality, but was exquisitely beautiful.

And, while the rest were poring o'er their books,
 They pensive mused, and read each other's looks :
 While other schoolmates for distinction strove,
 And thought of fame, they only thought of love :
 While others various climes in books explored,
 Both idly sat — adorer and adored :
 Science for them had now no charms to boast ;
 Learning for them had all its virtue lost :
 Their only taste was love, and love's sweet ties,
 And writing ghazels to each other's eyes.

Yes, love triumphant came, engrossing all
 The fond luxuriant thoughts of youth and maid ;
 And, whilst subdued in that delicious thrall,
 Smiles and bright tears upon their features played.
 Then in soft converse did they pass the hours, —
 Their passion, like the season, fresh and fair ;
 Their opening path seemed decked with balmiest
 flowers,
 Their melting words as soft as summer air.
 Immersed in love so deep,
 They hoped suspicion would be lulled asleep,
 And none be conscious of their amorous state ;
 They hoped that none with prying eye,
 And gossip tongue invidiously,
 Might to the busy world its truth relate :
 And, thus possessed, they anxious thought
 Their passion would be kept unknown ;
 Wishing to seem what they were not,
 Though all observed their hearts were one.

By worldly prudence uncontrolled,
Their every glance their feelings told ;
For true love never yet had skill
To veil impassioned looks at will.
When ringlets of a thousand curls,
And ruby lips, and teeth of pearls,
And dark eyes flashing quick and bright,
Like lightning on the brow of night —
When charms like these their power display,
And steal the wildered heart away —
Can man, dissembling, coldly seem
Unmoved as by an idle dream ?
Kais saw her beauty, saw her grace,
The soft expression of her face ;
And as he gazed, and gazed again,
Distraction stung his burning brain :
No rest he found by day or night —
Laili forever in his sight.
But, oh ! when separation came,
More brightly glowed his ardent flame ;
And she, with equal sorrow fraught,
Bewailed the fate upon them brought.
— He wandered wild through lane and street.
With frantic step, as if to meet
Something which still his search defied,
Reckless of all that might betide.
His bosom heaved with groans and sighs,
Tears ever gushing from his eyes ;
And still he struggled to conceal
The anguish he was doomed to feel ;

And, maddened with excessive grief,
 In the lone desert sought relief.
 Thither, as morning dawned, he flew ;
 His head and feet no covering knew ;
 And every night, with growing pain,
 The woes of absence marked his strain.
 The secret path he eager chose
 Where Laili's distant mansion rose ;
 And kissed the door, and in that kiss
 Fancied he quaffed the cup of bliss.
 How fleet his steps to that sweet place !
 A thousand wings increased his pace ;
 But thence, his fond devotions paid,
 A thousand thorns his course delayed.

III.

MAJNUN SEEKS LAILI.

The lover from his mistress parted,
 Lingering, oppressed, and broken-hearted,
 Sank, like the sun all rayless, down —
 Khosru,¹ without his throne or crown.
 With matted locks and bosom bare,
 Unshielded from the scorching air,
 This hapless youth, absorbed in grief,
 Hoped with his friends to find relief ;
 The few, by strong affections bound,
 And, midst his woes, still faithful found.

¹ Khosru, a king of Persia.

But vain the refuge — friendship's smile
Could not his love-lorn heart beguile :
Again he hastened to that place remote,
 Where all he loved in life had gone :
He called her magic name, but she was not,
 Nor of her kindred, one, not one,
In that sequestered lonely spot :
He called a thousand times, but called in vain ;
 None heeded, for none heard the strain ;
And thence no fond reply that hapless youth could gain.

Laili had, with her kindred, been removed
 Among the Nijid mountains, where
She cherished still the thoughts of him she loved
 And her affection thus more deeply proved
 Amid that wild retreat. Kais sought her there ;
Sought her in rosy bower and silent glade,
Where the tall palm trees flung refreshing shade.
He called upon her name again ;
Again he called, alas ! in vain ;
His voice unheard, though raised on every side ;
Echo alone to his lament replied ;
And Laili ! Laili ! rang ¹ around,
 As if enamored of that magic sound.
Dejected and forlorn, fast-falling dew
Glistened upon his cheeks of pallid hue

¹ Thus Shakespeare, in *Twelfth Night*, i. 5 : —

“ Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
 And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out, Olivia ! ”

Through grove and frowning glen he lonely strayed,
 And with his griefs the rocks were vocal made.
 Beautiful Laili ! had she gone forever?—
 Could he that thought support? oh, never, never!
 Whilst deep emotion agonized his breast,
 He to the morning-breeze these words addressed :—

“Breeze of the morn! so fresh and sweet,
 Wilt thou my blooming mistress greet;
 And, nestling in her glossy hair,
 My tenderest thoughts, my love, declare?
 Wilt thou, while mid her tresses sporting,
 Their odorous balm, their perfume courting,
 Say to that soul-seducing maid,
 In grief how prostrate I am laid!
 And gently whisper in her ear
 This message, with an accent clear :—
 ‘Thy form is ever in my sight,
 In thought by day, in dreams by night;
 For one, in spirits sad and broken,
 That mole would be the happiest token;
 That mole¹ which adds to every look
 A magic spell I cannot brook;
 For he who sees thy melting charms,
 And does not feel his soul in arms,
 Bursting with passion, rapture, all
 That speak love’s deepest, wildest thrall,

¹ The mole is regarded as an additional charm to beauty among Oriental writers. Thus Hafiz: “If that maid of Shiraz would accept my hand, I would give for the black mole on her cheek the cities of Samarcand and Bokhara.” See Vol. II. 344.

Must be, as Kaf's¹ ice-summit, cold,
And, haply, scarce of human mould.
Let him, unmoved by charms like thine,
His worthless life at once resign —
Those lips are sugar, heavenly sweet ;
O let but mine their pouting meet !
The balsam of delight they shed ;
Their radiant color ruby-red.
The Evil eye has struck my heart,
But thine in beauty sped the dart :
Thus many a flower, of richest hue,
Hath fallen and perished where it grew ;
Thy beauty is the sun in brightness,
Thy form a Peri's self in lightness ;
A treasure thou, which, poets say,
The heavens would gladly steal away —
Too good, too pure, on earth to stay ! ””

IV.

MAJNUN GOES TO MECCA.

As morning broke, the sun, with golden light,
Eclipsed the twinkling stars of silvery white ;
And Majnun, rising, eagerly pursued
The path which wound to Laili's solitude,
Grieved to the heart; and, as he went along,
His lips breathed softly some impassioned song ;
Some favorite lay, which tenderly expressed

¹ Kaf, the Caucasus.

The present feeling of his anxious breast.
 In fancy soon her image he beheld ;
 No shadowy cloud her lucid beauty veiled ;
 He saw her fresh as morning's scented air —
 Himself exhausted by incessant care :
 He saw her blooming as the blushing rose —
 Himself dejected by unnumbered woes :
 He saw her like an angel soft and bland —
 Himself consuming like a lighted brand :
 Her ringlets flowing loosely to the ground,
 His ringlets, fetters by affection bound ;
 And still, all faint with grief, he passed his days,
 Pouring his soul out in melodious lays.

His friends, to whom his griefs are known,
 His altered aspect now bemoan ;
 Alarmed to hear the sufferer still
 In frantic mood unceasing fill
 The night-breeze with his plaintive woes ;
 For sorrow with indulgence grows.
 They try to soothe his wildered mind,
 Where reason once was seen enshrined ;
 His father, with a father's love,
 Sought his sad sorrows to remove,
 And gave him maxims full and clear,
 And counsel meet for youth to hear.
 But, though good counsel and advice
 May often lead to Paradise,
 When love has once the heart engrossed,
 All counsel, all advice is lost ;

And weeping Majnun not a word
Of his poor father's counsel heard.
Ah ! when did prudence e'er control
The frenzy of a love-lorn soul ?

Disconsolate the father now
Behind the Harem-screen appears,
Inquiring of his females how
He best might dry the maniac's tears ;
And what had drawn the sparkling moon
Of intellect from him so soon.
The answer of both old and young
Was ready quivering on the tongue —
“ His fate is fixed — his eyes have seen
The charms of his affection's queen
In all their winning power displayed ;
His heart a captive to that Arab maid.
Then what relief canst thou supply ?
What to the bleeding lover, doomed to die ?
What but fulfilling his desires ?
And this a father's generous aid requires.
See them united in the bands of love ;
And that alone his frenzy will remove.”

These words (for woman's words convey
A spell, converting night to day,
Diffuse o'er troubled life a balm,
And passion's fiercest fever calm) —
These words relieve the father's heart,
And comfort to his thoughts impart.
Resolved at once, he now with speed

Marshals his followers, man and steed ;
 And, all assembled, bends his way
 To the damsel's home, without delay.

Approaching, quick th' inquiry rose—
 “Come ye hither as friends or foes ?
 Whatever may your errand be,
 That errand must be told to me ;
 For none, unless a sanctioned friend,
 Can pass the boundary I defend.”

This challenge touched Syd Omri's pride ;
 And yet he calmly thus replied :—
 “I come in friendship, and propose
 All future chance of feud to close.”
 Then to the maiden's father said :—
 “The nuptial feast may now be spread :
 My son with thirsty heart has seen
 Thy fountain pure with margin green ;
 And every fountain, clear and bright,
 Gives to the thirsty heart delight.
 That fountain he demands. With shame,
 Possessed of power, and wealth, and fame,
 I to his silly humor bend,
 And humbly seek his fate to blend
 With one inferior. Need I tell
 My own high lineage, known so well ?
 If sympathy my heart incline,
 Or vengeance, still the means are mine.
 Treasure and arms can amply bear

Me through the toils of desert-war ;
Thou art the merchant, pedler-chief,
I the buyer ; come, sell, — be brief !
If thou art wise, accept advice ;
Sell, and receive a princely price ! ”

The sire of Laili marked his haughty tone,
But smoothly answered, — “ Not on us alone
Depends the nuptial union — but on Heaven,
By which all power, and right, and truth are given.
However just our reasoning may appear,
We’re still beset by endless error here ;
And proffered friendship may perchance become
The harbinger of strife and of the tomb ;
Madness is neither sin nor crime, we know,
But who’d be linked to madness or a foe ?
Thy son is mad — his senses first restore ;
In constant prayer the aid of Heaven implore ;
But while portentous gloom pervades his brain,
Disturb me not with this vain suit again.
The jewel, sense, no purchaser can buy,
Nor treachery the place of sense supply.
Thou hast my reasons — and this parley o’er,
Keep them in mind, and trouble me no more ! ”
Abashed, his very heartstrings torn,
Thus to be met with scoff and scorn,
Syd Omri to his followers turned,
His cheek with kindled anger burned ;
But, scorning more to do or say,
Indignant homeward urged his way.

And now for a disordered mind,
 What medicine can affection find?
 What magic power, what human skill,
 To rectify the erring will?

— The necromancer's art they tried —
 Charms, philtres used, to win a bride,
 And make a father's heart relent,
 As if by Heaven in pity sent. —
 Vain efforts all. They now address
 Kind words his mind to soothe and bless,
 And urge in his unwilling ear
 (Treason and death for him to hear).

“ Another love, of nobler race,
 Unmatched in form, unmatched in grace ;
 All blandishments and fairy wiles ;
 Her every glance the heart beguiles ;
 An idol of transcendent worth,
 With charms eclipsing royal birth ;
 Whose balmy lips like rubies glow ;
 Sugar and milk their sweetness show ;
 Her words like softest music flow :
 Adorned in all the pride of spring,
 Her robes around rich odors fling ;
 Sparkling with gold and gems, she seems
 The bright perfection of a lover's dreams ;
 Then why, with such a prize at home,
 For charms inferior amid strangers roam ?
 Bid all unduteous thoughts depart,
 And wisely banish Laili from thy heart.”
 When Majnun saw his hopes decay,

Their fairest blossoms fade away ;
And friends and sire, who might have been
Kind intercessors, rush between
Him and the only wish that shed
One ray of comfort round his head
(His fondly cherished Arab maid),
He beat his hands, his garments tore,
He cast his fetters on the floor
In broken fragments, and in wrath
Sought the dark wilderness's path ;
And there he wept and sobbed aloud,
Unwitnessed by the gazing crowd ;
His eyes all tears, his soul all flame,
Repeating still his Laili's name,
And Laili ! Laili ! echoed round,
Still dwelling on that rapturous sound.

— In pilgrim-garb he reckless strayed,
No covering on his feet or head ;
And still, as memory touched his brain,
He murmured some love-wilder'd strain :
But still her name was ever on his tongue,
And Laili ! Laili ! still through grove and forest rung.

Sad inmate of the desert wild,
His form and face with dust defiled ;
Exhausted with his grief's excess,
He sat him down in weariness.

“ Estranged from friends,” he weeping cried,
“ My homeward course is dark to me ;
But, Laili, were I at thy side,

How blessed would thy poor lover be !
 My kindred think of me with shame ;
 My friends they shudder at my name.

That cup of wine I held, alas !
 Dropped from my hand, is dashed in pieces ;
 And thus it is that, like the glass,
 Life's hope in one dark moment ceases.
 O ye who never felt distress,
 Never gay scenes of joy forsaking,
 Whose minds, at peace, no cares oppress,
 What know ye of a heart that's breaking !”

* * * * *

Worn out at length, he sank upon the ground,
 And there in tears the mournful youth is found
 By those who traced his wanderings : gently they
 Home to his sire the faded form convey :
 Syd Omri and his kinsmen round him moan,
 And, weeping wildly, make his griefs their own ;
 And, garrulous, recall to memory's eye
 The progress of his life from infancy —
 The flattering promise of his boyish days —
 And find the wreck of hope on which they gaze.
 They deemed that Mecca's sacred fane
 His reason would restore again ;
 That blesse'd boon to mortals given,
 The arc of earth, the arc of heaven ;
 The holy Kaba where the prophet prayed,
 Where Zam-Zam's waters yield their saving aid.
 'Tis now the season of the pilgrimage,

And now assemble merchant, chieftain, sage,
With vows and offerings, on that spot divine :
Thousands and thousands throng the splendid shrine.
And now, on that high purpose bent, await
Syd Omri's camels, ready at his gate ;
Around their necks the tinkling bells are hung,
Rich-tasselled housings on their backs are flung,
And Majnun, faint, and reckless what may be,
Is on a litter placed — sad sight to see ! —
And tenderly caressed, whilst borne along
By the rough-moving camel, fleet and strong.
The desert soon is passed, and Mecca's bright
And glittering minarets rise upon the sight ;
Where golden gifts, and sacrifice, and prayer,
Secure the absolution sought for there.
The father, entering that all-powerful shrine,
Thus prays : " Have mercy, Heaven, on me and
mine !
Oh, from my son this frenzied mood remove,
And save him, save him from the bane of love ! "
Majnun at this, poor wayward child,
Looked in his father's face and smiled ;
And frankly said his life should prove
The truth and holiness of love.
" My heart is bound by beauty's spell,
My love is indestructible.
Am I to separate from my own,
From her for whom I breathe alone ?
What friend could wish me to resign
A love so pure, so true as mine ?

What though I like a taper burn,
 And almost to a shadow turn,
 I envy not the heart that's free —
 Love's soul-encircling chains for me ! ”

The love that springs from Heaven is blessed ;
 Unholy passions stain the rest ;
 That is not love : wild fancy's birth,
 Which lives on change, is constant never :
 But Majnun's love was not of earth,
 Glowing with heavenly truth forever ;
 An earthly object raised the flame,
 But 'twas from Heaven the inspiration came.

In silent sorrow the aged sire
 Found all his cares were vain ;
 And back to his expecting tribe
 Addressed his steps again ;
 For Mecca had no power to cool
 The lover's burning brain ;
 No consolation, no relief
 For the old man's heart-consuming grief.

v.

MAJNUN RETURNS HOME.

Sweet Laili's kinsmen now describe
 To the proud chieftain of their tribe
 A youth amidst the desert seen,
 In strange attire, of frantic mien ;

His arms outstretched, his head all bare,
And floating loose his clustering hair :
“ In a distracted mood ” — they say —
“ He wanders hither every day ;
And often, with fantastic bound,
Dances, or prostrate hugs the ground ;
Or, in a voice the soul to move,
Warbles the melting songs of love ;
Songs which, when breathed in tones so true,
A thousand hearts at once subdue.

He speaks — and all who listen hear
Words which they hold in memory dear ;
And we and thine endure the shame,
And Laili blushes at his name.”
And now the chieftain, roused to wrath,
Threatens to cross the maniac’s path.

But, haply, to prevent that barbarous deed,
To Omri’s palmy groves the tidings flew,
And soon the father sends a chosen few
To seek the lost one. Promptly they proceed
O’er open plain and thicket deep,
Embowering glen and rocky steep,
Exploring with unwearied eye
Wherever man might pass or lie,
O’ercome by grief or death. In vain
Their sight on every side they strain,
No Majnun’s voice, nor form, to cheer
Their anxious hearts ; but far and near
The yell of prowling beasts they hear.

Mournful, they deem him lost or dead,
 And tears of bitterest anguish shed.
 But he, the wanderer from his home,
 Found not from beasts a living tomb ;
 His passion's pure and holy flame
 Their native fierceness seemed to tame ;
 Tiger and ravenous wolf passed by him,
 The fell hyena came not nigh him ;
 As if, ferocity to quell,
 His form had been invisible,
 Or bore a life-protecting spell.
 Upon a fountain's emerald brink
 Majnun had stooped its lucid wave to drink ;
 And his despairing friends described
 Him laid along that murmuring fountain's side,
 Wailing his sorrows still ; his feeble voice
 Dwelt, ever dwelt, upon his heart's sole choice.
 A wild emotion trembled in his eye,
 His bosom wrung with many a deep-drawn sigh ;
 And groans, and tears, and music's softest lay,
 Successive marked his melancholy day.
 — Now he is stretched along the burning sand,
 A stone his pillow — now, upraised his hand,
 He breathes a prayer for Laili, and again
 The desert echoes with some mournful strain.
 As wine deprives us of the sense we boast,
 So reason in love's maddening draughts is lost.

Restored to home again, he dreads to meet
 His father's frowns, and bends to kiss his feet ;

Then, gazing wildly, rises up, and speaks,
And in a piteous tone forgiveness seeks : —
“ Sad is my fate, o’ercast my youthful morn,
My rose’s leaves, my life’s sweet buds are torn ;
I sit in darkness, ashes o’er my head,
To all the world’s alluring pleasures dead ;
For me what poor excuse can soothe thy mind ?
Thou art my father still — O still be kind ! ”
Syd Omri his unchanged affection proved,
And, folding to his breast the child he loved,
Exclaimed : “ My boy ! I grieve to mark
Thy reason erring still, and dark :
A fire consuming every thread
Of which thy thrilling nerves are made.
Sit down, and from thy eyesight tear
The poisonous thorn that rankles there :
‘Tis best we should to mirth incline,
But let it not be raised by wine :
‘Tis well desire should fill the breast ;
Not such desire as breaks our rest.
Remain not under grief’s control,
Nor taunt of foe which stings the soul ;
Let wisdom every moment guide ;
Error but swells affliction’s tide ;
What though thy love hath set thee all on fire,
And thy heart burns with still unquenched desire,
Despair not of a remedy ;
From seedling springs the shady tree ;
From hope continued follows gladness,
Which dull despair had lost in sadness ;

Associate with the wealthy, they
Will show to glittering wealth the way ;
A wanderer never gathers store,
Be thou a wanderer now no more.
Wealth opens every door, and gives
Command, and homage still receives :
Be patient, then, and patience will
By slow degrees thy coffers fill.
That river, rolling deep and broad,
Once but a narrow streamlet flowed ;
That lofty mountain, now in view,
Its height from small beginnings drew.
He who impatient hurries on,
Hoping for gems, obtains a stone,
Shrewdness and cunning gain the prize,
While wisdom's self unprosperous lies :
The fox of crafty, subtle mind
Leaves the wolf's dulness far behind ;
Be thou discreet, thy thoughts employ,
The world's inviting pomp enjoy.—
In search of wealth from day to day
Love's useless passion dies away ;
The sensual make disease their guest,
And nourish scorpions in their breast.
And is thy heart so worthless grown,
To be the cruel sport of one ?
Keep it from woman's scathe, and still
Obedient to thy own free will,
And mindful of a parent's voice,
Make him, and not thy foes, rejoice.”

Majnun replied : " My father ! — father still ! —
My power is gone ; I cannot change my will :
The moral counsel thou hast given to me
(To one who cannot from his bondage flee)
Avails me nothing. 'Tis no choice of mine,
But Fate's decree, that I should thus repine :
Stand I alone ? Look round, on every side
Are broken hearts, by sternest fortune tried :
Shadows are not self-made — the silver moon
Is not self-stationed, but th' Almighty's boon.
From the huge elephant's stupendous form,
To that of the poor ant, the smallest worm,
Through every grade of life, all power is given,
All joy or anguish, by the Lord of Heaven.
I sought not, I, misfortune — but it came ;
I sought not fire, yet my heart is all flame :
They ask me why I never laugh nor smile,
Though laughter be no sign of sense the while.
If I should laugh in merry mood, agape,
Amidst my mirth some secret might escape.
— A partridge seized an ant, resolved to kill
The feeble creature with his horny bill ;
When, laughing loud, the ant exclaimed — ' Alas !
A partridge thou ! and art thou such an ass ?
I'm but a gnat, and dost thou think to float
A gnat's slight filmy texture down thy throat ? '
The partridge laughed at this unusual sound,
And, laughing, dropped the ant upon the ground.
Thus he who idly laughs will always find
Some grief succeed — 'tis so with all mankind.

The stupid partridge, laughing, drooped his crest,
And by that folly lost what he possessed.

— This poor old drudge, which bears its heavy load,
Must all life long endure the same rough road ;
No joy for him, in mortal aid no trust,
No rest till death consigns him to the dust.”

Here paused the youth, and wept ; and now
The household smooth his furrowed brow,
And with unceasing eagerness
Seek to remove his soul’s distress.
But grief, corroding grief, allows no space
 For quiet thoughts ; his wounds break out anew ;
His kindred every change of feature trace,
 And unavailing tears their cheeks bedew ;
A deeper, keener anguish marks his face ;
His faded form so haggard to the view ;
 Useless the task his sorrows to remove,
For who can free the heart from love, unchanging love ?

Few days had passed, when, frantic grown,
 He burst from his domestic prison,
And in the desert wild, alone,
 Poured, like the morning bird, new risen,
His ardent lay of love. Not long
The mountains echoed with his song,
Ere, drawn by sounds so sweet and clear,
A crowd of listeners hovered near :
They saw him, tall as cypress, stand,
A rocky fragment in his hand ;

A purple sash his waist around,
His legs with links of iron bound ;
Yet, unencumbered was his gait ;
They only showed his maniac state.

* * * * *

Wandering he reached a spot of ground,
With palmy groves and poplars crowned ;
A lively scene it was to view,
Where flowers too bloomed, of every hue ;
In wonder lost, he saw the axe applied
To fell a cypress tree — and thus he cried :
“Gardener ! did ever love thy heart control ?
Was ever woman mistress of thy soul ?
When joy has thrilled through every glowing nerve,
Hadst thou no wish that feeling to preserve ?
Does not a woman’s love delight, entrance,
And every blessing fortune yields enhance ?
Then stop that lifted hand, the stroke suspend,
Spare, spare the cypress tree, and be my friend !
And why ? Look there, and be forewarned by me,
’Tis Laili’s form, all grace and majesty ;
Wouldst thou root up resemblance so complete,
And lay its branches withering at thy feet ?
What ! Laili’s form ? no ; spare the cypress tree ;
Let it remain, still beautiful and free ;
Yes, let my prayers thy kindliest feelings move,
And save the graceful shape of her I love !”
— The gardener dropped his axe, o’ercome with
shame,
And left the tree to bloom, and speak of Laili’s fame.

VI.

LAILI WRITES.

Laili in beauty, softness, grace,
Surpassed the loveliest of her race ;
She was a fresh and odorous flower,
Plucked by a fairy from her bower ;
With heart-delighting rosebuds blooming,
The welcome breeze of spring perfuming.
The killing witchery that lies
In her soft, black, delicious eyes,
When gathered in one amorous glance,
Pierces the heart like sword or lance ;
The prey that falls into her snare,
For life must mourn and struggle there ;
Her eyelash speaks a thousand blisses,
Her lips of ruby ask for kisses ;
Soft lips where sugar-sweetness dwells,
Sweet as the bee-hive's honey-cells ;
Her cheeks, so beautiful and bright,
Had stole the moon's resplendent light ;
Her form the cypress tree expresses,
And full and ripe invites caresses.
With all these charms the heart to win,
There was a cureless grief within —
Yet none beheld her grief, or heard ;
She drooped like broken-wingèd bird.
Her secret thoughts her love concealing,
But, softly to the terrace stealing,

From morn to eve she gazed around,
In hopes her Majnun might be found,
Wandering in sight. For she had none
To sympathize with her — not one !
None to compassionate her woes —
In dread of rivals, friends, and foes ;
And though she smiled, her mind's distress
Filled all her thoughts with bitterness ;
The fire of absence on them preyed,
But light nor smoke that fire betrayed ;
Shut up within herself, she sate,
Absorbed in grief, disconsolate ;
Yet true love has resources still,
Its soothing arts, and ever will !

Voices in guarded softness rose
Upon her ever listening ear ;
She heard her constant lover's woes,
In melting strains, repeated near ;

The sky, with gloomy clouds o'erspread,
At length soft showers began to shed ;
And what, before, destruction seemed,
With rays of better promise gleamed.

Voices of young and old she heard
Beneath the harem-walls reciting
Her Majnun's songs ; each thrilling word
Her almost broken heart delighting.

Laili, with matchless charms of face,
Was blessed with equal mental grace ;

With eloquence and taste refined ;
And from the treasures of her mind
She poured her fondest love's confession
With faithful love's most warm expression ;
Told all her hopes and sorrows o'er,
Though told a thousand times before :
The life-blood circling through her veins
Recorded her affecting strains ;
And as she wrote, with passion flushed,
The glowing words with crimson blushed.
And now the terrace she ascends
In secret, o'er the rampart bends,
And flings the record, with a sigh,
To one that moment passing by :
Unmarked the stranger gains the prize,
And from the spot like lightning flies
To where the lingering lover weeps unseen.
— Starting upon his feet, with cheerful mien,
He gazes, reads, devours the pleasing tale,
And joy again illumines his features pale.

Thus was resumed the soft exchange of thought ;
Thus the return of tenderest feeling wrought :
Each the same secret intercourse pursued,
And mutual vows more ardently renewed ;
And many a time between them went and came
The fondest tokens of their deathless flame ;
Now in hope's heaven, now in despair's abyss,
And now enrapt in visionary bliss.

VII.

GROVE OF PALMS.

The gloomy veil of night withdrawn,
How sweetly looks the silvery dawn ;
Rich blossoms laugh on every tree,
Like men of fortunate destiny,
Or the shining face of revelry.

The crimson tulip and golden rose
Their sweets to all the world disclose.
I mark the glittering pearly wave
The fountain's banks of emerald lave ;
The birds in every arbor sing,
The very raven hails the spring ;
The partridge and the ring-dove raise
Their joyous notes in songs of praise ;
But bulbuls, through the mountain-vale,
Like Majnun, chant a mournful tale.

The season of the rose has led
Laili to her own favorite bower ;
Her cheeks the softest vermil-red,
Her eyes the modest sumbul flower.

She has left her father's painted hall,
She has left the terrace where she kept
Her secret watch till evening fall,
And where she oft till midnight wept.

A golden fillet sparkling round
Her brow, her raven tresses bound ;
And as she o'er the greensward tripped,

A train of damsels ruby-lipped,
Blooming like flowers of Samarcand,
Obedient bowed to her command.
She glittered like a moon among
The beauties of the starry throng,
With lovely forms as Houris bright,
Or Peris glancing in the light ;
And now they reach an emerald spot,
Beside a cool sequestered grot,
And soft recline beneath the shade,
By a delicious rose-bower made :
There, in soft converse, sport, and play,
The hours unnoted glide away ;
But Laili to the Bulbul tells
What secret grief her bosom swells,
And fancies, through the rustling leaves,
She from the garden-breeze receives
The breathings of her own true love,
Fond as the cooings of the dove.

In that romantic neighborhood
A grove of palms majestic stood ;
Never in Arab desert wild
A more enchanting prospect smiled ;
So fragrant, of so bright a hue,
Not Irem richer verdure knew ;
Nor fountain half so clear, so sweet,
As that which flowed at Laili's feet.

The Grove of Palms her steps invites ;
She strolls amid its varied scenes,

Its pleasant copses, evergreens,
In which her wakened heart delights.
Where'er the genial zephyr sighs,
Lilies and roses near her rise :
Awhile the prospect charms her sight,
Awhile she feels her bosom light,
Her eyes with pleasure beaming bright :
But sadness o'er her spirit steals,
And thoughts, too deep to hide, reveals :
Beneath a cypress tree reclined,
In secret thus she breathes her mind :—
“ O faithful friend, and lover true,
Still distant from thy Laili's view ;
Still absent, still beyond her power
To bring thee to her fragrant bower ;
O noble youth, still thou art mine,
And Laili, Laili still is thine ! ”

As thus she almost dreaming spoke,
A voice reproachful her attention woke.
“ What ! hast thou banished prudence from thy
mind ?
And shall success be given to one unkind ?
Majnun on billows of despair is tossed,
Laili has nothing of her pleasures lost ;
Majnun has sorrow gnawing at his heart,
Laili's blithe looks far other thoughts impart ;
Majnun the poison-thorn of grief endures,
Laili, all wiles and softness, still allures ;
Majnun her victim in a thousand ways,
Laili in mirth and pastime spends her days ;

Majnun's unnumbered wounds his rest destroy,
 Laili exists but in the bowers of joy ;
 Majnun is bound by love's mysterious spell,
 Laili's bright cheeks of cheerful feelings tell ;
 Majnum his Laili's absence ever mourns,
 Laili's light mind to other objects turns.”

At this reproof tears flowed apace
 Down Laili's pale, dejected face ;
 But soon to her glad heart was known
 The trick, thus practised by her own
 Gay, watchful, ever-sportive train,
 Who long had watched, nor watched in vain ;
 And marked in her love's voice and look,
 Which never woman's glance mistook.
 Her mother too, with keener eye,
 Saw deeper through the mystery,
 Which Laili thought her story veiled,
 And oft that fatal choice bewailed ;
 But Laili still loved on ; the root
 Sprang up, and bore both bud and fruit ;
 And she believed her secret flower
 As safe as treasure in a guarded tower.

VIII.

MAJNUN'S RIVAL.

That day on which she pensive strayed
 Amidst the Grove of Palms — that day

How sweetly bloomed the Arab maid,
Girt by her train in fair array !
Her moist red lips, her teeth of pearl,
Her hair in many a witching curl ;
Haply, on that devoted day,
A gallant youth, with flowers gay,
In splendid fashion passed that way ;
Who saw that lamp of beauty gleaming,
Her luscious eye with softness beaming ;
And in his bosom rose the fire
Of still-increasing fond desire.
Resolved at once her hand to claim
(Ibn Salam his honored name),
He from her parents seeks success,
Offering the nuptial-knot to tie ;
And, to promote that happiness,
Scatters his gold abundantly,
As if it were but common earth,
Or sand, or water, little worth —
But he was of illustrious birth.
The parents scarce believed the word,
The marriage-union thus preferred ;
And, though consenting, still they prayed
The nuptial morn might be delayed :
In her no ripened bloom was seen,
The sweet pomegranate still was green ;
But a future day should surely deck
With a bridle yoke her spotless neck ;
“ We will then surrender the maiden to thee,
The maiden, till now, unaffianced and free ! ”

The promise soothes his eager heart,
He and his followers, pleased, depart.

IX.

THE BATTLE FOR LAILI.

Majnun, midst wild and solitude,
His melancholy mood pursued ;
In sterner moments, loud he raved,
The desert's burning noon-tide braved,
Or, where refreshing shadows fell,
Warbled of her he loved so well.

The Arab chief of that domain
Which now his wandering footsteps pressed,
Was honored for his bounteous reign —
For ever succoring the distressed.

Noufal his name — well known to wield,
Victorious in the battle-field,
His glittering sword, and overthrow
The robber-band or martial foe ;
Magnificent in pomp and state,
And wealthy as in valor great.

One day the pleasures of the chase,
The keen pursuit of bounding deer,
Had brought the chieftain to that place
Where Majnun stood, and, drawing near,
The stranger's features sought to trace,

And the sad notes of grief to hear,
Which, ere he saw the maniac's face,
Had, sorrow-laden, struck his ear.

He now beheld that wasted frame,
That head and mien o'ergrown with hair,
That wild, wild look, which well might claim
Brotherly kindred with despair,
Dejected, miserable, borne
By grief to life's last narrow verge,
With wounded feet and vestment torn,
Singing his own funereal dirge.

Noufal had traversed forest, copse, and glade,
In anxious quest of game, and here he found
Game — but what game? — alas! a human shade,
So light, it scarcely seemed to touch the ground.

Dismounting straight, he hears what woes
Had marred the mournful youth's repose;
And kindly tries with gentle words
To show what pleasures life affords;
And prove the uselessness, the folly,
Of nursing grief and melancholy;
But worse, when men from reason flee,
And willing steep their hearts in misery.

The sympathy of generous minds
Around the heart its influence winds,
And, ever soothing, by degrees,

Restores its long-lost harmonies :
 Majnun, so long to love a prey,
 Death hastening on by swift decay,
 Began to feel that calming spell,
 That sweet delight, unspeakable,
 Which draws us from ourselves away.

A change now gently o'er him came ;
 With trembling hand he took the cup,
 And drank, but drank in Laili's name,
 The life-restoring cordial up.
 His spirits rose ; refreshing food
 At Noufal's hospitable board
 Seemed to remove his wayward mood,
 So long endured, so long deplored.

And Noufal with delight surveyed
 The social joy his eyes betrayed,
 And heard his glowing strains of love,
 His murmurings like the turtle-dove,
 While thinking of his Arab maid.
 Changed from himself, his mind at rest,
 In customary robes he dressed ;
 A turban shades his forehead pale,
 No more is heard the lover's wail,
 But, jocund as the vintner's guest,
 He laughs and drinks with added zest ;
 His dungeon gloom exchanged for day,
 His cheeks a rosy tint display ;
 He revels midst the garden's sweets,

And still his lip the goblet meets :
But so devoted, so unchanged his flame,
Never without repeating Laili's name.

In friendly converse, heart uniting heart,
Noufal and Majnun hand in hand are seen ;
And, from each other loathing to depart,
Wander untired by fount and meadow green.
But what is friendship to a soul
Inured to more intense control ?
A zephyr breathing over flowers,
Compared to when the tempest lours ?
A zephyr, friendship's gentler course ;
A tempest, love's tumultuous force ;
For friendship leaves a vacuum still,
Which love, and love alone, can fill :
So Majnun felt ; and Noufal tried,
In vain, to fill that aching void :
For, though the liquid sparkling red
Still flowed, his friend thus sorrowing said :
“ My generous host, with plenty blessed,
No boding cares thy thoughts molest ;
Thy kindness many a charm hath given,
But not one solace under heaven ;
Without my love, in tears I languish,
And not a voice to check my anguish ;
Like one of thirst about to die,
And every fountain near him dry :
Thirst is by water quenched, not treasure,
Nor floods of wine, nor festive pleasure.

Bring me the cure my wounds require ;
 Quench in my heart this raging fire ;
 My Laili, oh ! my Laili give,
 Or thy poor friend must cease to live ! ”

Majnun had scarce his wish expressed
 Ere rose in generous Noufal’s breast
 The firm resolve to serve his friend,
 And to his settled purpose bend
 Laili’s stern father :

Now, in arms arrayed,
 And lifting high his keen Damascus blade,
 He calls a band of veterans to his aid.
 Swift as the feathered race the assembled train
 Rush, sword in hand, along the desert plain ;
 And when the chieftain’s habitation bright
 Upon the blue horizon strikes the sight,
 He sends a messenger to claim the bride,
 In terms imperious, not to be denied ;
 Yet was that claim derided. “ Thou wilt soon
 Repent this folly : Laili is the moon ;
 And who presumes the splendid moon to gain ?
 Is there on earth a man so mad, so vain ?
 Who draw their swords at such a hazard ? None.
 Who strikes his crystal vase upon a stone ? ”
 Noufal again endeavors to inspire
 With dread of vengeance Laili’s haughty sire ;
 But useless are the threats — the same reply —
 “ Alike thy power and vengeance I defy ! ”
 The parley over, Noufal draws his sword,
 And with his horsemen pours upon the horde,

Ready for battle. Spears and helmets ring,
And brass-bound shields ; loud twangs the archer's
string ;
The field of conflict like the ocean roars,
When the huge billows burst upon the shores.
Arrows, like birds, on either foeman stood,
Drinking with open beak the vital flood ;
The shining daggers in the battle's heat
Rolled many a head beneath the horses' feet ;
And lightnings, hurled by death's unsparing hand,
Spread consternation through the weeping land.
Amidst the horrors of that fatal fight,
Majnun appeared — a strange appalling sight !
Wildly he raved, confounding friend and foe,
His garments half abandoned in his woe,
And with a maniac stare reproachful cried —
“ Why combat thus when all are on my side ? ”
The foeman laughed — the uproar louder grew —
No pause the brazen drums or trumpets knew ;
The stoutest heart sank at the carnage wrought ;
Swords blushed to see the numerous heads they
smote.
— Noufal with dragon-fierceness prowled around,
And hurled opposing warriors to the ground :
Whatever hero felt his ponderous gerz¹
Was crushed, tho' steadfast as the Mount Elberz ;

¹ Gerz, a mace or club. Elberz is a celebrated mountain in Persia, and forms a favorite simile in the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdausi. The immovable firmness of his heroes is generally compared to the Mount Elberz.

Upon whatever head his weapon fell,
 There was but one heartrending tale to tell.
 Like a mad elephant the foe he met ;
 With hostile blood his blade continued wet ;
 — Wearied at length, both tribes at once withdrew,
 Resolved with morn the combat to renew ;
 But Noufal's gallant friends had suffered most ;
 In one hour more the battle had been lost ;
 And thence assistance, ere the following dawn,
 From other warlike tribes was promptly drawn.

The desert rang again. In front and rear
 Glittered bright sword and buckler, gerz and spear ;
 Again the struggle woke the echoes round,
 Swords clashed, and blood again made red the
 ground ;
 The book of life, with dust and carnage stained,
 Was soon destroyed, and not a leaf remained.
 At last, the tribe of Laili's sire gave way,
 And Noufal won the hard-contested day ;
 Numbers lay bleeding of that conquered band,
 And died unsuccored on the burning sand.

And now the elders of that tribe appear,
 Imploring the proud victor. “ Chieftain, hear !
 The work of slaughter is complete ;
 Thou seest our power destroyed ; allow
 Us, wretched suppliants, at thy feet,
 Humbly to ask for mercy now.
 How many warriors press the plain,
 Khanjer and spear have laid them low ;

At peace, behold our kinsmen slain,
And thou art now without a foe.

“ Then pardon what of wrong has been :
Let us retire, unharmed — unstayed —
Far from this sanguinary scene,
And take thy prize — the Arab Maid.”

Then came the father, full of grief, and said —
(Ashes and dust upon his hoary head,)
“ With thee, alas ! how useless to contend !
Thou art the conqueror, and to thee I bend.
Without resentment now the vanquished view,
Wounded and old, and broken-hearted too ;
Reproach has fallen upon me, and has dared
To call me Persian — that I disregard ;
For I’m an Arab still, and scorn the sneer
Of braggart fools, unused to shield and spear.
But let that pass. I now, o’ercome, and weak,
And prostrate, pardon from the victor seek :
Thy slave am I, obedient to thy will,
Ready thy sternest purpose to fulfil ;
But if with Laili I consent to part,
Wilt thou blot out all vengeance from thy heart ?
Then speak at once, and thy behest declare :
I will not flinch, though it my soul may tear.
My daughter shall be brought at thy command ;
Let the red flames ascend from blazing brand,
Waiting their victim, crackling in the air,
And Laili duteously shall perish there.

Or, if thou'dst rather see the maiden bleed,
 This thirsty sword shall do the dreadful deed ;
 Dissever at one blow that lovely head,
 Her sinless blood by her own father shed !
 In all things thou shalt find me faithful, true,
 Thy slave obsequious, — what wouldst have me do ?
 But mark me ; I am not to be beguiled ;
 I will not to a demon give my child ;
 I will not to a madman's wild embrace
 Consign the pride and honor of my race,
 And wed her to contempt and foul disgrace.
 I will not sacrifice my tribe's fair fame,
 Nor taint with obloquy her virtuous name.
 Has honor on an Arab heart no claim ?
 Better be overwhelmed by adverse fate
 Than yield up honor, e'en for kingly state.
 Through all Arabia is her virtue known ;
 Her beauty matched by heavenly charms alone.
 I'd rather in a monster be enshrined
 Than bear a name detested by mankind.
 What ! wed a wretch, and earn my country's ban ?
 A dog were better than a demon-man.
 A dog's bite heals, but human gnawings never ;
 The festering poison-wounds remain forever."

Thus spake the father, and in Noufal's breast
 Excited feelings not to be repressed :
 "I hoped to win consent," he said —
 "But now that anxious hope is dead,
 And thou and thine may quit the field,

Still armed with khanjer, sword, and shield ;
Horseman and elder. Thus in vain
Blood has bedewed this thirsty plain.”

When Majnun this conclusion hears,
He flies incensed to Noufal, and with tears
Wildly exclaims : “The dawn, my generous friend !
Promised this day in happiness would end ;
But thou hast let the gazelle slip away,
And me defrauded of my beauteous prey.
Near where Forat’s¹ bright stream rolls on, reclined,
Stanching my wounds, hope soothed my tortured
mind,
And gave me Laili ; now that hope is crossed,
And life’s most valued charm forever lost.”

Noufal with heavy heart now homeward bent
His way, and Majnun with him sorrowing went ;
And there again the pitying chieftain strove
To calm the withering pangs of hopeless love ;
To bless, with gentleness and tender care,
The wounded spirit sinking in despair :
But vain his efforts ; mountain, wood, and plain
Soon heard the maniac’s piercing woes again ;
Escaped from listening ear, and watchful eye,
Lonely again in desert wild to lie.

¹ The river Euphrates. The scene is laid in the country surrounding Bagdad.

x.

MAJNUN SAVES A DEER.

The minstrel strikes his soft guitar,
 With sad forebodings pale ;
 And fills with song the balmy air,
 And thus resumes his tale : —

The pensive bird, compelled to cower,
 From day to day in Noufal's bower,
 Tired of the scene, with pinions light,
 Swift as the wind has urged its flight,
 And, far from Noufal's wide domain,
 Enjoys its liberty again ;
 Pouring aloud its sad complaint
 In wildest mood without restraint.

And now remote from peopled town,
 Midst tangled forest, parched and brown,
 The maniac roams ; with double speed
 He goads along his snorting steed,
 Till, in a grove, a sportsman's snare
 Attracts his view, and, struggling there,
 Its knotted meshes fast between,
 Some newly prisoned deer are seen ;
 And as the sportsman forward springs
 To seize on one, and promptly brings
 The fatal knife upon its neck,
 His hand receives a sudden check ;

And looking upward, with surprise
(A mounted chief before his eyes !),
He stops — while thus exclaims the youth :
“ If e'er thy bosom throbbed with ruth,
Forbear ! for 'tis a crime to spill
A gazelle's blood — it bodeth ill ;
Then set the pleading captive free ;
For sweet is life and liberty.
That heart must be as marble hard,
And merciless as wolf or pard,
Which clouds in death that large black eye,
Beaming like Laili's, lovingly.
The cruel stroke, my friend, withhold ;
Its neck deserves a string of gold.
Observe its slender limbs, the grace
And winning meekness of its face.
The musk-pod is its fatal dower,
Like beauty, still the prey of power ;
And for that fragrant gift thou'rt led
The gentle gazelle's blood to shed !
Oh, seek not gain by cruel deed,
Nor let the innocent victim bleed.”
“ But,” cried the sportsman, “ these are mine ;
I cannot at my task repine :
The sportsman's task ; 'tis free from blame,
To watch and snare the forest game.”

Majnun, upon this stern reply,
Alighted from his steed, and said —
“ Oh, let them live ! they must not die.

Forbear ! and take this barb instead.”
 The sportsman seized it eagerly,
 And, laughing, from the greenwood sped.

Majnun, delighted, viewed his purchased prize,
 And in the gazelle’s sees his Laili’s eyes ;
 But soon, freed from the snare, with nimble feet
 The tremblers bound to some more safe retreat.
 The simple maniac starts, and finds, amazed,
 The vision vanished which his fancy raised.

* * * * *

’Tis night — and darkness, black as Laili’s tresses,
 Veils all around, and all his soul oppresses ;
 No lucid moon like Laili’s face appears ;
 No glimpse of light the gloomy prospect cheers :
 In a rude cavern he despairing lies,
 The tedious moments only marked with sighs.

XI.

LAILI MARRIES IBN SALAM.

Behold, what clouds of dust emerge
 From the lone desert’s distant verge !
 And, high in dusky eddies driven,
 Obscure the azure hue of heaven :
 And now the tramp of steeds is heard,
 And now the leader’s angry word —
 Now nearer, more distinct they grow —
 Who is that leader ? — friend or foe ?

Alas ! 'tis Laili's vanquished sire,
Returning home, his heart on fire ;
For though he has survived the blow,
He keenly feels his overthrow.

His tale is told : some Diw¹ or Ghoul
Has palsied his intrepid soul,
And held his arm by magic foul,
Or potion from the enchanter's bowl ;
Else had he driven, with easy hand,
The miscreant Noufal from the land ;
For when did ever braggart lord
Fail, but when magic held his sword ?

Now, shielded by the harem screen,
The sweet Narcissus sad is seen :
Listening she hears, disconsolate,
Her father's words, which seal her fate ;
And what has Laili now to bear,
But loneliness, reproach, despair,
With no congenial spirit to impart
One single solace to her bursting heart !

Meanwhile the spicy gale on every side
Wafts the high vaunting of her beauty's pride
Through all the neighboring tribes, and more
remote

¹ "Div—demon, giant, devil, ghost, hobgoblin. The divs, genii, or giants, in Eastern mythology, are a race of malignant beings. The ghoul is an imaginary sylvan demon, of different shapes and colors, supposed to devour men and animals. Anything which suddenly attacks and destroys a man, or robs him of his senses."—RICHARDSON.

Her name is whispered and her favor sought.
 Suitors with various claims appear — the great,
 The rich, the powerful — all impatient wait
 To know for whom the father keeps that rare
 But fragile crystal with such watchful care.
 Her charms eclipse all others of her sex,
 Given to be loved, but rival hearts to vex ;
 For when the lamp of joy illumines her cheeks,
 The lover smiles, and yet his heart it breaks :
 The full-blown rose thus sheds its fragrance round ;
 But there are thorns, not given to charm, but wound.

Among the rest that stripling came,
 Who had before avowed his flame ;
 His cheerful aspect seemed to say,
 For him was fixed the nuptial-day.

His offerings are magnificent ;
 Garments embroidered every fold,
 And rarest gems, to win consent,
 And carpets worked with silk and gold :
 Amber, and pearls, and rubies bright,
 And bags of musk, attract the sight ;
 And camels of unequalled speed,
 And ambling nags of purest breed ; —
 These (resting for a while) he sends
 Before him, and instructs his friends,
 With all the eloquence and power
 Persuasion brings in favoring hour,
 To magnify his worth, and prove
 That he alone deserves her love. —

“A youth of royal presence, Yemen’s boast,
Fierce as a lion, mighty as a host ;
Of boundless wealth, and valor’s self, he wields
His conquering sword amid embattled fields.
Call ye for blood? ’tis shed by his own hand.
Call ye for gold? he scatters it like sand.”

And when the flowers of speech their scent had shed,
Diffusing honors round the suitor’s head ;
Exalting him to more than mortal worth,
In person manly, noble in his birth ;
The sire of Laili seemed oppressed with thought,
As if with some repulsive feeling fraught ;
Yet promptly was the answer given — he soon
Decreed the fate of Yemen’s splendid moon ;
Saddled the steed of his desire, in sooth,
Flung his own offspring in the dragon’s mouth.
Forthwith the nuptial pomp, the nuptial rites,

Engage the chieftain’s household — every square
Rings with the rattling drums whose noise excites
More deafening clamor through the wide bazaar.
The pipe and cymbal, shrill and loud,
Delight the gay assembled crowd ;
And all is mirth and jollity,
With song, and dance, and revelry.
But Laili mournful sits apart,
‘The shaft of misery through her heart ;
And black portentous clouds are seen
Darkening her soft expressive mien ;
Her bosom swells with heavy sighs,

Tears gush from those heart-winning eyes,
 Where Love's triumphant witchery lies.
 In blooming spring a withered leaf,
 She droops in agony of grief ;
 Loving her own — her only one —
 Loving Majnun, and him alone ;
 All else from her affections gone ;
 And to be joined, in a moment's breath,
 To another ! — Death, and worse than death !

Soon as the sparkling stars of night
 Had disappeared, and floods of light
 Shed from the morn's resplendent beam
 Empurpled Dijla's¹ rolling stream,
 The bridegroom, joyous, rose to see
 The bride equipped as bride should be :
 The litter and the golden throne,
 Prepared for her to rest upon :
 But what avails the tenderest care,
 The fondest love, when dark despair
 And utter hatred fill the breast
 Of her to whom that fondness is addressed ?
 Quickly her sharp disdain the bridegroom feels,²
 And from her scornful presence shrinks and reels :
 A solemn oath she takes, and cries,
 With frenzy flashing from her eyes, —

¹ The river Tigris.

² The original makes Laili rather Amazonian at this juncture, which is not quite in keeping with the gentleness of her character. It says she struck him such a blow, that he fell down as if he were dead.

“Horest thou I ever shall be thine?
It is my father’s will, not mine !
Rather than be that thing abhorred,
My life-blood shall distain thy sword.
Away ! nor longer seek to gain
A heart foredoomed to endless pain ;
A heart, no power of thine can move ;
A bleeding heart, which scorns thy love !”

When Ibn Salam her frenzied look beheld,
And heard her vows, his cherished hopes were quelled.
He soon perceived what art had been employed,—
All his bright visions faded and destroyed ;—
And found, when love has turned a maiden’s brain,
Father and mother urge their power in vain.

XII.

MAJNUN HEARS OF THE WEDDING.

The Arab poets who rehearse
Their legends in immortal verse,
Say, when Majnun these tidings knew,
More wild, more moody wild, he grew ;
Raving through wood and mountain glen ;
Flying still more the haunts of men.

Sudden a perfume, grateful to the soul,
O’er his awakened senses stole.
He thought from Laili’s fragrant couch it came,
It filled with joy his wearied frame.

Ecstatic with the unexpected pleasure,
 The fond memorial of his dearest treasure,
 He sank upon the ground, beneath the shade
 Of a broad palm, in senseless torpor laid.

A stranger, quickly passing by,
 Observed the love-lorn wanderer lie
 Sleeping, or dead, and checked his camel's pace
 To mark the features of his face.
 Loud roaring, like a demon, he awoke
 The maniac from his trance, and gayly spoke :
 " Up, up, thou sluggard ! up and see,
 What thy heart's-ease has done for thee !
 Better drive feeling from thy mind,
 Since there's no faith in womankind :
 Better be idle, than employed
 In fruitless toil ; better avoid
 A mistress, though of form divine,
 If she be fair and false as thine !
 They've given her charms to one as young —
 The bride-veil o'er her brow is flung :
 Close, side by side,¹ from morn till night,
 Kissing and dalliance their delight ;
 Whilst thou, from human solace flying,
 With unrequited love art dying.
 — Distant from her adorer's view,
 One in a thousand may be true :
 The pen which writes, as if it knew
 A woman's promise, splits in two.

¹ Literally, Every day, ear in ear.

While in another's warm embrace,
No witness to thy own disgrace,
Faithless, she wastes no thought on thee,
Wrapped in her own felicity.
Woman's desire is more intense
Than man's — more exquisite her sense ;
But, never blinded by her flame,
Gain and fruition are her aim.
A woman's love is selfish all ;
Possessions, wealth, secure her fall.
How many false and cruel prove,
And not one faithful in her love !
A contradiction is her life ;
Without, all peace ; within, all strife ;
A dangerous friend, a fatal foe,
Prime breeder¹ of a world of woe.
When we are joyous, she is sad ;
When deep in sorrow, she is glad.
Such is the life a woman leads,
And in her sorcery still succeeds.”

These words confused the lover's brain ;
Fire ran through every swelling vein :
Frantic he dashed his forehead on the ground,

¹ *Afati-jehan*, the calamity of the world. A common epithet applied in anger to the fair sex. Something in the spirit of Otway : —

“ Who lost Marc Antony the world ? a woman.
Who was the cause of a long ten-years' war,
And laid at last old Troy in ashes ? woman,
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman ! ”

And blood flowed trickling from the ghastly wound.
 "What added curse is this?" he groaning said,—
 "Another tempest, roaring round my head!"

When ever did a bleeding heart
 Betray no sign of blighted reason?
 Can the most skilful gardener's art
 Still keep his flowers or fruit in season?
 No ; hearts dissolved in grief give birth
 To madness, as the teeming earth
 Yields herbs ; and yet bewildered mind,
 To all but one bright object blind,
 Suffers no censure from the seer
 Who guides the faithful Moslem here.
 Love sanctifies the erring thought,
 And Heaven forgives the deed by frenzy wrought.
 "A rose, a lovely rose, I found,
 With thorns and briers compassed round ;
 And, struggling to possess that prize,
 The gardener in his wrath denies,
 Behold my heart, all torn and bleeding,
 Its pangs all other pangs exceeding :
 I see the leaves expand and bloom,
 I smell its exquisite perfume ;
 Its color, blushing in the light,
 Gives to my raptured soul delight :
 I weep beneath the cypress tree,
 And still the rose is not for me.
 Alas ! none hear, nor mark my moan ;
 Pride of my soul, my rose, is gone !

Another has, in open day,
Borne the heart-winning prize away.
Though wrapped in sweetest innocence,
The fell oppressor snatched her thence.
But who deserves the curse that's sped
Upon the foul betrayer's head?
The gardener, in his lust for gold,
That rose — the boast of Irem — sold.
Poor wretch ! if worlds of wealth were mine,
Full willingly I'd make them thine ;
But not a dirhem for that rose,
The fatal cause of all my woes.
I would not play a villain's part,
And buy with gold a woman's heart ;
'Tis not in gold to purchase love,
Above all wealth, all price above ;
For I would rather die than see
A smile on lips that are not free.
Give me the boundless swell of bliss,
The heart upspringing to the kiss,
When life, and soul, and breath combine
To tell me, she is only mine ;
The flood of joy o'erwhelming quite
My glowing senses with delight.
— Base wretch ! and thou that rose hast sold :
A demon's curse upon thy gold ! ”

The traveller witnessed with surprise
How he the maniac's heart had wrung —
What remedy could he devise ?

He from his camel sprung ;
 And when the sufferer seemed to be restored,
 Forgiveness anxiously implored :
 “ ‘Twas wrong, and I deserve the blame ;
 I marked with infamy her name :
 My fault is of the darkest hue,—
 My crime — for Laili still is true !
 What though in nuptial band united,
 Her faith, to thee so often plighted,
 Spotless remains, still firm, unbroken,
 As proved by many a mournful token.
 For every moment’s space can claim
 A thousand recollections of thy name :
 Thus ever present to her memory,
 She lives, and only lives for thee.
 One year has passed since she was made a bride ;
 But what of years ? whatever may betide,
 Were it a thousand, still her heart’s the same,
 Unchanged, unchangeable her earliest cherished
 flame.”

Now Majnun, desolate, his fate perceived,
 As in a glass, the misery of his lot,
 And, from the first impression scarce relieved,
 Felt his abandonment, and only not forgot.

Wasted and wan, he fluttered where he lay ;
 And, turning to that magic point which led
 To where his angel-face was wont to stay,
 Thus, in a melancholy tone, he said : —

“ Alas ! my passion glowed in every part ;
Thine in thy tongue, but never in thy heart ;
With thy new love hast thou so amorous grown ?
And am I worthless as a desert-stone ?
What is a word, a promise, oath, or pledge ?
Mockery, which never can the heart engage.
What was my garden’s wealth but fruit and flowers ?
And all that wealth a raven now devours ;
And what has been my constant care and toil,
But for another to prepare the spoil ?
When first my soul was destined to be thine,
I little thought that treasure to resign ;
Think of thy broken vows, to what they tend ;
Think of thy falsehood, and lament its end.
My doom is fixed ; my choice no longer free ;
My martyr-life devoted still to thee ! ”

XIII.

MAJNUN’S FATHER DIES.

Meantime, the father mourned his wretched state,
Like Jacob o’er his Joseph’s unknown fate ;
No rest by day, no sleep by night ;
Grief o’er him shed its withering blight ;
Incessant yearnings wrung his heart,
He sat in darkness, silent, lone :
“ Why did my child from home depart ?
Where has the hopeless wanderer gone ? ”
Dreading that Death’s relentless dart

His best-loved had overthrown.
Sudden he rose — despair gave force
 And vigor to his aged frame ;
And, almost frantic with remorse,
 Gathering upon himself the blame,
He trod the maze of wood and wild,
Seeking his poor forsaken child ;
And when the day withdrew its light,
He passed in cavern rude the night ;
But never ceased his venturous quest —
No peace for him — no strengthening rest.
In vain he paced the desert round,
For not a trace of him was found.
At length a herdsman, falling in his way,
Described the spot where Majnun lay ;
Craggy, and deep, and terrible to view,
It seemed a grave all damp with noxious dew.
Thither proceeding, by the stranger led,
He finds with horror that sepulchral bed ;
And, fearful of the worst, beholds the wreck
 Of Majnun, his once-lovely boy ; —
He sees a serpent winding round his neck,
 Playful, not destined to destroy :
It stays but for a moment — all around,
Limbs half-devoured, and bones, bestrew the ground.
With cautious step descending, he surveys
Th' unconscious youth, who meets his anxious gaze
With a wild look which could not recognize
 The tottering form before him : “ Who art thou ?
And what thy errand ? ” The old man replies : —

“ I am thy father ! I have found thee now,
After long search ? ” Embracing, both remained
In deep compassionate sorrow, fondly strained
Each to the other’s bosom ; and when he,
The maniac, had regained his memory,
And beams of light burst through his ’nighted brain,
And he beheld and knew his sire again,
Joy sparkled in his faded eye awhile,
And his parched lips seemed curled into a smile.
The poor old father said, with feeble voice,
“ Thou makest my heart both tremble and rejoice :
The path o’er which thy feet are doomed to pass
Show blades of swords, not harmless blades of grass ;
And I would warn thee never more to roam ;
Thy only safety is to stay at home.
Dogs have a home, and thou hast none to boast :
Art thou a man, to human comfort lost ?
If man thou art, then like a man appear,
Or, if a demon, be a demon here.
The ghoul, created to perplex the earth,
Is still a ghoul, and answers to its birth ;
But thou’rt a man ; and why, with human soul,
Forget thy nature and become a ghoul ?
To-day if thou shouldst throw the reins aside,
To-morrow thou mayst ask, and be denied.
Soon shall I pass away, and be at rest ;
No longer this frail world’s unhappy guest.
My day is mingling with the shades of night ;
My life is losing all its wonted light.
Soul of thy father ! reinspired with grace,

Rise, and protect the honors of thy race,
 That, ere this frame be in the grave laid low,
 I may the guardian of my birthright know ;
 That, ere I die, to soothe a parent's grief,
 Thou mayst be hailed in thine own home the chief.
 Forbid it, Heaven, that, when my hour is past,
 My house and home should to the winds be cast !
 That plundering strangers, with rapacious hand,
 Should waste my treasure and despoil my land !
 And Heaven forbid, that both at once should fall,
 (My greatest dread), and thus extinguish all !
 That when the summons reaches me to die,
 Thy death should also swell the funeral cry ! ”

These words sank deep in Majnun's breast : he seemed

Altered in mood, as through his senses streamed
 The memory of his home, the fond regard
 Of his dear mother, and the joys he shared
 From her affection. Days and nights he tried
 To banish from his thoughts another's bride :
 Repentance came, and oft the strife renewed,
 But tyrant love that feeling soon subdued ;
 (Love, a wild elephant in might, which grows
 More powerful when opposed by friends or foes ;)
 And the poor maniac thus his sire addressed :
 “ Thy counsel, father, is the wisest, best ;
 And I would gladly to thy wish conform :
 But what am I ? a helpless wretch, a worm,
 Without the power to do what I approve,
 Enslaved, the victim of almighty love.

To me the world is swallowed up — I see
Nothing but Laili — all is lost to me,
Save her bright image — father, mother, home,
All buried in impenetrable gloom,
Beyond my feeling ; — yet I know thou'rt here,
And I could weep ; — but what avails the tear,
Even were it at a father's funeral shed ?
For human sorrows never reach the dead.
Thou say'st the night of Death is on thee falling !
Then must I weep, thy fostering care recalling ;
But I shall die in utter misery,
And none be left in life to weep for me."

Syd Omri, with unutterable grief,
Gazed on his son, whose sorrows mocked relief ;
And, hopeless, wretched, every thought resigned
That once was balm and comfort to his mind.
Then, showering blessings o'er his offspring's head,
Groaning, he parted from that dismal cave ;
And, wrapt in deepest anguish, homeward sped ;
But 'twas, alas ! to his expected grave.

Gently he sank, by age and grief oppressed,
From this vain world to that endless rest.
Vain world indeed ! who ever rested here ?
The lustrous moon hath its eternal sphere ;
But man, who in this mortal prison sighs,
Appears like lightning, and like lightning flies.

A pilgrim-step approached the wild retreat,
Where Majnun lingered in his rocky seat,
And the sad tale was told. He fell
Upon the earth insensible ;

And, grovelling, with a frantic air,
His bosom beat — he tore his hair,
And never rested, night or day,
Till he had wandered far away,
Reached the sad spot where peaceful lay
His father's bones, now crumbling with decay.
His arms around the grave he flung,
And to the earth delirious clung ;
Grasping the ashes of the dead,
He cast them o'er his prostrate head,
And, with repentant tears, bedewed
The holy relics round him strewed.
O'erwhelming was the sharpened sense
Of his contrition, deep, intense ;
And sickness wrapped his shattered frame
In a slow fever's parching flame :
Still, ceaseless, 'twas his wont to rave
Upon his father's sacred grave.
He felt the bitterness of fate ;
He saw his folly now too late ;
And worlds would give again to share
His generous father's constant care ;
For he had oft, in wanton guise,
Contemned the counsels of the wise ;
Had with a child's impatience burned,
And scorn for sympathy returned ;
And now, like all of human mould,
When the indulgent heart is cold,
Which would have sealed his happiness,
He mourns — but mourns his own distress ;

For, when the diamond blazed like day,
He cast it recklessly away.

XIV.

MAJNUN SEEKS THE FOREST.

Who's this that wanders near that palmy glade,
Where the fresh breeze adds coolness to the shade?
'Tis Majnun ; — he has left his father's tomb,
Again mid rocks and scorching plains to roam,
Unmindful of the sun's meridian heat,
Or the damp dewy night, with unshod feet ;
Unmindful of the forest's savage brood,
Howling on every side in quest of blood ;
No dread has he from aught of earth or air,
From den or eyry, calm in his despair :
He seems to court new perils, and can view
With unblenched visage scenes of darkest hue ;
Yet is he gentle, and his gracious mien
Checks the extended claw, where blood has been ;
For tiger, wolf, and panther gather round
The maniac as their king, and lick the ground ;
Fox and hyena fierce their snarling cease ;
Lion and fawn familiar meet in peace ;
Vulture and soaring eagle, on the wing,
Around his place of rest their shadows fling ;
Like Suliman,¹ o'er all extends his reign ;

¹ No name is more famous in the East than Solomon. Omnipotence is said to have placed under his obedience not only mankind, but animals. The birds were his constant attendants, screening him like a canopy from the inclemencies of the weather.

His pillow is the lion's shaggy mane ;
The wily leopard, on the herbage spread,
Forms like a carpet his romantic bed ;
And lynx and wolf, in harmony combined,
Frisk o'er the sward and gambol with the hind.
All pay their homage with respect profound,
As if in circles of enchantment bound.

Among the rest, one little fawn
Skipped nimbly o'er the flowery lawn ;
And, beautifully delicate,
Sprang where th' admiring maniac sate :
So soft, so meek, so sweetly mild,
So shy, so innocently wild,
And, ever playful in his sight,
The fondling grew his great delight ;
He loved its pleasing form to trace,
And kiss its full black eyes and face,
Thinking of Laili all the while ;
For fantasies the heart beguile ;
And, with th' illusive dream impressed,
He hugged the favorite to his breast :
With his own hand the fawn he fed,
And choicest herbs before it spread ;
And all the beasts assembled there
Partook of his indulgent care,
And, day and night, they, unconstrained,
In wondrous harmony remained.
And thus throughout the world, we find
Mid brutes, as well as humankind,

A liberal hand, a friendly voice,
Bids e'en the savage heart rejoice.
There is a curious story told
Of a despotic king of old,
Which proves ferocious beasts endued
With a deep sense of gratitude.
The king had in his palace bounds
A den of man-devouring hounds ;
And all on whom his anger fell
Were cast into that dreadful cell.
Among the courtiers there was one,
For wisdom, wit, and shrewdness known,
Long in the royal household nursed,
But still he always feared the worst,
Thinking the fatal day might come
For him to share an equal doom ;
And therefore, by a dexterous scheme,
His life endeavored to redeem.
Unseen, by night, he often stood
And fed the hounds with savory food ;
And well their bounteous friend they knew
And in their hearts attachment grew ;
When, just as he, prophetic, thought,
The king his death unfeeling sought ;
Sternly his good old courtier blamed,
And to the ravenous dogs condemned.
'Twas night when in the den he cast
His victim for a dog's repast :
Next morn, unshamed by such a deed
(Dooming the innocent to bleed),

He sent a page to look for him.
Torn, he expected, limb from limb :
The wondering keeper, who obeyed
The king, and not a trice delayed,
Now, hastening to the presence, cried :—
“ O king ! his virtue has been tried ;
He bears an angel’s blessed charm,
And God protects his life from harm :
Untouched, though fettered fast, I found him,
The dogs all fondly fawning round him ! ”
The king was struck with wonderment
At this miraculous event ;
And seeing, in that horrid cell,
The guiltless courtier safe and well,
He asked, with tears profusely shed,
By what strange spell he was not dead ?
“ No juggling words had I to say ;
I fed the bloodhounds every day ;
And thence their gratitude arose,
Which saved me from my cruel foes.
But I have served thee many a year,
And for it thou hast sent me here !
A dog has feeling — thou hast none —
A dog is thankful for a bone ;
But thou, with hands in blood imbrued,
Hast not one spark of gratitude.”
Abashed the despot saw his crimes,
And changed his frightful course betimes.

xv.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Sweet slumber had diffused the charm of rest
Through the poor maniac's agitated breast,
And as the morn, magnificently bright,
Poured o'er the cloudless sky its purple light,
The smiling presage¹ of a prosperous day,
He rose refreshed, and hailed the heavenly ray.
Graceful he stood amidst the varied herd,
And, warmed with hope, his orisons preferred ;
When suddenly a horseman met his view,
Who, as it seemed, the wandering lover knew.
“ Romantic youth ! I see the timorous deer
And the fierce lion meet in concord here,
And thou the monarch — strange ! but mark ! I bear
A secret tale of one, so loved, so fair,
What wouldst thou feel, did I her name declare ?
What is the cypress to her form divine ?
What is the perfume from a martyr’s shrine ?
What, should that idol’s fate be mixed with thine ?
Her ringlets twisted like the graceful Jim,²
Her shape an Alif, and her mouth a Mim ;
Her eyes like two Narcissuses, that grow

¹ Literally, on that day he rose up on the right-hand side ; a sign that his fortune would be auspicious.

² To make this Persian conceit, of not unfrequent occurrence, understood, it may be enough to say the letter Jim, of the Persian as well as Arabic alphabet, is formed something like the capital T of the German text; the Alif, like our number One in writing; and the Arabic letter Mim, a small horizontal oval.

Where the pure waters of a fountain flow ;
 Her eyebrows, joined, a double arch express ;
 Her beauteous cheeks an angel might caress.
 But what can I of such perfection say ?
 How to the blind Creation's charms portray ?
 I saw her weep — the tear-drops glistening fell
 In showers from eyes which their own tale could tell ;
 And yet I asked for whom she wept and mourned —
 For one untrue, or one to dust returned ?
 Opening her ruby lips, she softly said : —
 ' My heart¹ is desolate — my joys are fled ;
 I once was Laili — need I more reveal ?
 Worse than a thousand maniacs now I feel :
 More wild than that dark star which rules my fate,
 More mad than Majnun's my distracted state.
 If that dark spirit thou shouldst haply find —
 That mournful wreck of an enlightened mind —
 How wilt thou recognize him ? By that sad
 Disordered aspect, oft pronounced as mad ;
 By that unutterable grief which preys
 Upon his heart ; that melancholy gaze,
 Which has no sense of outward things ; that love
 So pure, an emanation from above.
 O that I could escape this wretched thrall,
 And leave, forever leave, my father's hall !
 But go, and seek the wanderer ; — glen and cave
 Patient explore — his refuge, or his grave :
 Find him ; and, faithful, with unwearied feet

¹ The original runs, Salt is thrown upon my heart, expressive of anguish.

Return, and tell me his forlorn retreat.'
Silent I heard her earnest prayer ;
Marked her desponding voice and air ;
And while she still, in tenderest mood,
Bedewed with tears, before me stood,
The story of thy woes, which long
Had been the theme of many a song,
Familiar to the country round,
I sang, and deep affection found ;
So deep, that, sigh succeeding sigh,
She trembled in her agony,
And, senseless, sank upon the ground,
Where pale and motionless she lay
As if her life had ebbed away.
But soon as that dread swoon was o'er,
And sobs and tears relieved her heart ;
Again she pressed me to restore
Him she adored — ' If kind thou art,
And kind thou must be to a wretch forlorn,
I feel thou wouldst not play a traitor's part ;
Thou canst not view my misery with scorn.
Alas ! though I may seem to him untrue,
Pity is still to woman's sorrows due.'

" Her rosy fingers press
The written tale of her distress ;
And, raising to her ruby mouth
That passionate record of her truth,
Kissed it a thousand times, and shed
A flood of tears, whilst mournfully she said —

‘To him this sad memorial give —
To him for whom alone I live.’ ”

Majnun, perplexed, with painful feelings riven,
Seemed to refuse what still to him was Heaven ;
Imputed falsehood swept across his mind,
But left no dark distrustful thoughts behind.
At length, the writing eagerly he took ;
But, as he read, he faltered, wept, and shook.

Adoring the Creator,¹ she began : —
“ Beyond the praise of tongue, to mortal man
His love and goodness,” — thus her *nameh* ran —
“ He with the light of wisdom cheers the soul ;
He bids the cheek to glow, the eye to roll,
And every mortal bends to His control.
To this, He scatters jewels bright and rare,
To that, good sense to strive with worldly care :
To me He gave the love which time defies —
The love I bear thee, spotless from the skies ;
Fountain of Khizer,² sparkling in the shade !
Fountain of life to thine own Arab maid !
In truth and love to thee my heart was given, —

¹ This is the usual process in Oriental composition ; and there is not a document ever written in Arabic or Persian but has the letter Alif, at least, placed at the top of the page, signifying there is but one God. The poets are especially scrupulous in pious exordiums to the Deity.

² Khizer is the name of a prophet, who, according to Oriental tradition, was vizier and general to an ancient king of Persia. They say that he discovered and drank of the fountain of life, and that, in consequence, he will not die till the last trumpet. He is by some confounded with the prophet Elias, and, which is somewhat singular, likewise with St. George of England, whom they call Khizer Elias, imagining that the same soul animated both by transmigration.

That truth and love remain, the gift of Heaven.
Though far from thee — a wife against my will,
I am thine own affianced partner still :
Still single — still, in purity and faith,
Thine own unchanged — unchangeable in death.
Thou'rt all the world to me — the very earth
Thou tread'st on is to me of matchless worth ;
Yet in a different sphere my race is run ;
I am the moon, and thou the radiant sun :
By destiny thus sundered — how can I
Merit reproach, who at thy feet would die !
Since thus divided, pity thou my lot,
With all thy vows and raptures unforgot ;
Life's sweetest flowerets, in their brightest bloom,
Turned to the bitterness of fell *Zikum.*"¹

Yes, Majnun wept and shook ; and now
What answer could he frame, and how ?
A wanderer, destitute — no reed,
No tablets, to supply his need —
But Laili's messenger had brought
The means — and thus the maniac wrote : —
" To Him who formed the starry throne
Of heaven, and rules the world alone ;
Who, in the dark mysterious mine,
Maketh the unseen diamond shine ;
Who thus on human life bestows
The gem which in devotion glows ;

¹ An infernal tree, mentioned in the Koran, the fruit of which is supposed to be the heads of devils.

To Him be gratitude and praise,
The constant theme of Moslem lays !
— A burning heart, in sorrow deep,
What can it do but sigh and weep ?
And what can this memorial bear
To thee, but wailings of despair ?
I am the dust beneath thy feet,
Though destined never more to meet.
Thy beauty is my Kaba shrine,
The arc of heaven, forever mine ;
Garden of Irem — hid from me,
The Paradise I must not see ;
Yet thou hast quenched my genial light ;
My day is now like blackest night.
With fondness on thy flattering tongue
Thou smilest, and my heart is wrung ;
For those whose tongues are gentlest found
Are wont to give the deadliest wound.
The lily's petals oft appear
As fatal as the sword or spear.
She, whom 'twas rapture to behold,
Could she be basely bought and sold ?
Couldst thou to me thy promise break,
And spurn me for another's sake ?
Acting a bland deceiver's part,
And solacing another's heart !
But, peace ! — no more of thoughts so sad,
Or I shall grow intensely mad ;
I yearn no more those lips to press ; —
But is the joy of memory less ?

The morning breeze thy fragrance brings ;
And up my heart exulting springs ;
Still more when I reflecting see
How once the cup was filled by thee.
O Heaven ! how rapturous to receive
That which forbids the heart to grieve ;
To sit with thee in amorous play,
And quaff the ruby every day ;
To kiss those lips, all honey-dew,
Of liquid bright cornelian hue !
Oh ! could I kiss them once again !
The fancy fires my wildered brain.
— Need I the painter's art to trace
The lineaments of thy angel face ?
No — they're indelibly impressed
Within my ever faithful breast.
'Tis ours, divided, to deplore
Scenes we can never witness more ;
But, though on earth denied to rest,
Shall we not both in heaven be blessed ! ”

* * * * *

Majnun's distracted state was not unknown
Where to the wretched kindness could be shown ;
— A wealthy chieftain (Selim was his name),
Whose generous deeds had won the world's acclaim ;
Whose heart was still on others' woes engaged —
He healed their wounds, their anguish he assuaged ;
Raiment and various food had oft supplied,
Where'er the love-lorn wanderer might abide.
Mounted upon his rapid steed, one day,

He sought the distant place where Majnun lay ;
And him at length, with placid mien, he found
By herds of forest beasts encompassed round.
Fearful of savage natures, he retired,
Till Majnun, beckoning, confidence inspired ;
And then, approaching near, he told his name,
And recognized him, though his wasted frame
Seemed an uncoffined corse. Ashamed, he said —
“ O let these robes thy naked body shade,
These robes for thee brought hither.” “ Not for me ;
I want no covering, — without clothes I’m free.
Behold these tattered fragments, thrown aside ;
These once were robes, and once my foolish pride.”
But, pressed again, those tatters he resumed,
And sat like one to death and darkness doomed. —
Now savory viands were before him spread,
But not a morsel raised he to his head ;
He turned him round, and, scorning the repast,
To his familiars all the banquet cast.
Then Selim asked : “ What is thy food, my friend ?
Without support, thy life must quickly end.”
—“ My spirit’s freshness, and its secret power,
Come from the breeze which marks the morning-hour ;
Yes, every zephyr from my mistress brings
Life to the soul upon its fragrant wings ;
When hunger presses, from the weeping trees
I gather gums, its cravings to appease ;
And herbs and grass, and the transparent rill,
Support me in the state thou seest me still ;
But though thy proffered food regale not me,

The beasts around enjoyed the banquetry ;
And if I sought on living thing to feed,
Birds might be caught ; but I detest the deed ;
And he who is contented grass to eat,
Defies the world — the world is at his feet ;
For what can pomp, and wealth, and feasts avail ?
I live on grass : — but hear the Zahid's tale.

“ In ancient times a king, they say,
Through a wild forest took his way ;
And marking, as along he rode,
A Zahid's desolate abode,
Asked his attendants if they knew
What the Recluse was wont to do ;
What was his food, and where he slept,
And why remote from man he kept. —
A courtier to the Zahid ran,
And soon brought forth that holy man ; —
‘ And wherefore dost thou pass thy days
Shunning the world's inviting ways,
Choosing this dismal wretched hole,
Grave of the body and the soul ? ’
— ‘ I have no friends to love me — none ;
No power, except to live alone.’
Then, where his fawns in quiet fed,
Took up some blades of grass, and said : —
‘ This is my food — this, want supplies ! ’
The courtier looked with scornful eyes,
And answered : ‘ Taste but royal food,
And thou'l not fancy grass so good.’

'Indeed !' the Zahid said, and smiled,
 'That is a sad mistake, my child !
 Worldlings are still to luxury prone ;
 To thee its sweetness is unknown ;
 Stranger to such delicious fare,
 No doubt thou'rt charmed with food more rare ;'
 — Soon as this speech the monarch heard,
 Noting, attentive, every word,
 And wondering such a seer to meet,
 Fell at the pious Zahid's feet,
 And kissed the greensward, as he knelt
 Where that contented hermit dwelt."

XVI.

MAJNUN'S MOTHER DIES.

O'er Majnun's spirit, long in darkness cast,
 A fitful gleam of homeward feeling passed ;
 And now he asks for friends he once preferred,
 Asks for his mother, broken-winged bird ;
 And wishes e'en to visit home again —
 As if the maddening fire had left his brain.
 Selim at this brief glimpse of reason caught,
 And to his mother's distant mansion brought
 Without delay the wanderer. Deep her grief
 To see how withered was that verdant leaf —
 To see the red rose faded from his cheek,
 His eye so altered, and his frame so weak ;
 From head to foot she kisses him, and weeps ;
 His hair, all matted, in her tears she steeps,

And clasps him fondly to her beating heart,
As if she never from her boy would part :—
“ My darling child ! the love-game thou hast played
Has thus, alas ! reduced thee to a shade ;
In that encounter sad of mortal scathe
Thou graspedst the two-edged scimiter of death.
Thy father gone, his troubles all are past,
Heartbroken man ! and I shall follow fast.
Arise ! and enter thy own mansion here ;
Come, ’tis thy own sweet home, and doubly dear—
Thy nest ;— and birds, though distant in their flight,
Always return to their own nests at night.
While yet an infant in thy cradle-bed,
I watched thy slumber, pillow'd thy sweet head ;
And canst thou now that mother’s fondness see,
And mark without remorse her love for thee ?
Refuse the joy thy presence can impart,
And cast a shadow o’er her drooping heart ? ”

A cloud again obscured the orb of day—
Again his wavering intellect gave way ;
“ Mother, there is no hope — the time is past ;
With gloom eternal is my fate o’ercast ;
No fault of mine — no crime, to press me down —
But all my countless woes to thee are known ;
Like a poor bird within its cage immured,
My soul has long this prison-life endured.
Ask me not, mother, to remain at home ;
For there, to me, no peace can ever come.
Oh, better will it be for me to stray
Mid mountain-glens, and herd with beasts of prey,

Than linger on a spot where human care
 Only augments my misery and despair." "
 He ceased and kissed his mother's feet, and fled
 Precipitate along the path which led
 To the wild mountains. Dreadful was the stroke !
 The mother's heart, like the old father's, broke ;
 In Death's cold ocean, wave follows wave ;
 And thus she followed to the silent grave.

Selim again the maniac's haunts explored,
 Again supplied his frugal board,
 And, with a mournful voice, the tale revealed —

Father and mother gone,
 Himself now left alone,

Sole heir — his doom of desolation sealed —

He beat his brows, and from his eyes
 Fell tears of blood ; his piercing cries
 Rang through the forest, and again,
 Pouring the saddest, wildest strain,
 He hastened from his gloomy cave,
 To weep upon his mother's grave.

But when that paroxysm of grief —
 That agony intense, but brief —

Had, like a whirlwind, passed away,
 And left him in a milder mood,

To love and Laili still a prey,

He trod again his mountain solitude :
 For what to him was hoarded store,
 The wealth of parents now no more ?
 Had he not long, ill-fated one !
 Abandoned all for love alone ?

XVII.

THE SERENADE.

Laili meanwhile had read and seen
What Majnun's thoughts had ever been ;
And though her plighted faith seemed broken,
From him she held the tenderest token :
Deep in her heart, a thousand woes
Disturbed her days' and nights' repose :
A serpent at its very core,
Writhing and gnawing evermore ;
And no relief — a prison-room
Being now the lovely sufferer's doom.
— Fate¹ looked at last with favoring eye ;
The night was dark, no watchman nigh ;
And she had gained the outer gate,
Where, shrouded, unobserved, she sate.
Gazing on every side to find
Some friend to calm her troubled mind ;
When, welcome as a cherished guest,
A holy seer her vision blessed,
Who, ever, like an angel, strove
The heart's deep anguish to remove ;
Who lived to succor the distressed,
To soothe and stanch the bleeding breast :
To him she spake : “ In pity hear,
A wretch distraught with love and fear !

¹ Literally, The day on which her food was not infested with flies.
A day free from misfortune or annoyance.

Know'st thou the youth, of peerless grace,
 Who mingles with the forest race,
 Savage or tame, and fills the air,
 Alas ! for me, with his despair ? ”

— “ Yes, lovely moon ! ” he answered, — “ well I know
 That hapless wanderer, and his cureless woe ;
 Laili still on his tongue, the Arab maid
 He ceaseless seeks through every bower and glade,
 Unconscious of the world, its bloom or blight,
 Laili alone forever in his sight.”

The Arab maiden wept, and cried : “ No more !
 I am the cause, and I his loss deplore ;
 Both have our sorrows, both are doomed to feel
 The wounds of absence, which will never heal ;
 For me he roams through desert wild and drear,
 While Fate condemns me to be fettered here ! ”
 — Then from her ear a lustrous gem she drew,
 Which, having kissed, she to the hermit threw —
 And said : “ Forbid it I should ask in vain !
 Let those fond eyes behold his face again !
 But caution must control the zeal you show :
 Some signal must be given, that I may know
 When he is nigh — some stanzas of his own
 Warbled beneath my casement, where, alone,
 I sit and watch — for secret must we be,
 Or all is lost to Majnun and to me ! ”
 — Within his girdle-fold the smiling saint
 Placed the rich gem, and on his errand went.
 But did no obstacle his task oppose ?
 A thousand, daily, in his progress rose :

Where'er his arduous course he anxious urged,
Perplexing paths in various lines diverged ;
Through tangled glens, the ground with creepers spread,
Meshes of shadowy branches o'er his head,
Now a wide plain before him — mountains gray,
And now an emerald greensward cheered his way :
At last upon a hillock's shady side,
The long-sought love-sick wanderer he descried,
By forest beasts surrounded,— in a ring,
Like guards appointed to protect their king.
Majnun perceived him, and with upraised hand
Made his wild followers at a distance stand ;
And then the seer approached — his homage paid —
“ O thou, unmatched in love ! ” he kindly said,
“ Laili, the world and beauty's queen,
Who long has thy adorer been ;
And many a year has run its race,
Since she has seen that pensive face —
Since she has heard that tuneful voice
Which ever made her heart rejoice :
And now, at her command, I bear
Her earnest, almost dying, prayer.
She longs to see thee once again,
To sit with thee and soothe thy pain ;
To feel, on pleasure's downy wings,
The joy a lover's presence brings.
And wilt thou not, with equal glee,
Behold thyself from bondage free ?
The Grove of Palms thy feet must trace,
Near Laili's rural dwelling-place.

That is the promised spot ; and thou
 Wilt there receive both pledge and vow,
 And sing, with voice-subdued and clear,
 Thy sweetest ghazel in her ear.”
 Majnun uprose with joyous look,
 And for his guide the hermit took :
 And, passing quick the space between,
 Arrived at that romantic scene
 Where the majestic palms displayed
 A cool, refreshing depth of shade ;
 And there the tribes of wood and plain,
 Which formed the wanderer’s vassal-train,
 Promptly as human retinue,
 To an adjoining copse withdrew.

The seer, advancing with a cautious pace,
 To the pavilion of that angel face —
 That star of beauty — that sweet silvery moon —
 Whispered the presence of her own Majnun.
 But woman’s mind can from its purpose range,
 And seem to change, without the power to change ;
 And thus she said : “ Alas ! it cannot be :
 I must not meet him : such is Fate’s decree ;
 The lamp thus lit, Love’s temple to illumine,
 Will not enlighten, but the heart consume ;
 For I am wedded — to another given —
 This worthless dust still in the view of Heaven ;
 And though compelled — let others bear the blame ! —
 I was not born to sacrifice my fame.
 Prudence forbids such perils should be mine ;

Rather forever let me here repine ;
But faithful still, with his melodious tongue
How often have the sweetest echoes rung ?
Yes, faithful still, he may upon mine ear
Chant the rich numbers which I love to hear :
Let him with nectar fill his luscious cup,
And, still adoring, I will drink it up.”
Prostrate, in tears, upon a fountain’s side,
The saint found Majnun, who impatient cried —
“ What is this amber incense round me flying ?
Is it the breath of spring o’er rosebuds sighing ?
No — not the fragrance of the early spring —
Laili’s sweet locks alone such odors fling !
So powerful is the impulse they impart,
They fill with dying ecstasy my heart.”

The saint, well-taught in love’s mysterious lore,
Knew what it was the absent to deplore ;
But said : “ Thou canst not hope that she,
Unsought, unasked, will come to thee !
Woman demands a warmer suit,
And none her sacred power dispute.”

“ Upbraid me not with maxim old —
Think’st thou that Majnun’s suit is cold
When, from the very scent, I feel
Intoxication o’er me steal ?
Must I the real bliss decline
And never taste the luscious wine ? ”
So saying, seated in that palmy grove,
To Laili thus he breathed his lay of love.

“O whither art thou gone ?
 And where am I? — alone !
 Forsaken, lost — and what remains ?
 Life only creeping through my veins ;
 And yet that life is not my own,
 But thine ; — I only breathe to moan :
 A thing of memory, to deplore
 The past, since hope can smile no more.
 Familiar to the pangs which scorn relief,
 Grief¹ smiles upon me, and I smile on grief.
 Grief makes thee dearer still ; for grief and thee
 Seem of each other born. Grief paints to me
 Thy matchless beauty : — without grief, no thought
 Of thy perfections to my mind is brought.
 O Heaven ! that ever we were doomed to part ! —
 We are but one — two bodies, and one heart.
 As summer clouds with rain the meadows greet,
 Majnun dissolves in sorrow at thy feet ;
 Whilst thy soft cheeks lend beauty to the sky,
 Majnun, alas ! is taught by them to die.
 The bulbul² o'er thy roses joyous stoops ;
 Majnun, from thee disjoined, divided, droops ;
 And whilst the world devotes itself to strife,
 Majnun would sacrifice to thee his life.
 O that kind fortune would our joys approve,
 And yield the blessings of successful love !
 The gorgeous moon, with her pellucid light,

¹ Shakespeare has something like this personification of grief in *King John*, iii.

² The bulbul is the nightingale.

Converting into dazzling day the night ;
And we together seated, ear to ear,
The sparkling wine, our beverage, ever near ;
I playing with those ringlets, which descend
In magic curls, and o'er thy shoulders bend ;
Thou, with those dark and love-enkindling eyes,
In which the living spell of witchery lies,
Gazing in fondness on me. That sweet lip !
I see it the rich wine enamoured sip :
I see us both — what happiness ! and none
To drive the sovereign pleasure from his throne ;
Nor shame, nor fear, to crush affection's flower,
Happy, unseen, in that sequestered bower.
— But bring me wine ! this bright illusion stay !
Wine ! wine ! keep sad realities away !
Wine, Saki, wine ! the house without a light
Is but a prison, odious to the sight ;
For broken hearts, immured in gloom like mine,
Are dungeon-dark, unblessed with light or wine ;
O God ! preserve me from this endless night !
Give me one day of joy — one moment of delight ! ”

Then, strangely moved, he wildly closed his lay,
Sprung on his feet, and sudden burst away ;
And Laili, who had heard him, deeply mourned,
And, sad, to her secluded home returned.

XVIII.

LOVE.

Through many a town and bower had spread
 The maniac's tale — all anxious read
 In Bagdad and far-distant plains
 The mournful lover's amorous strains ;
 And every heart, which had been wrung
 With withered hopes, in pity hung
 O'er sorrows which to madness drove —
 The very martyrdom of love.
 And all aspired to seek the cave
 Which hourly might become his grave ;
 To find th' enduring man ; to view
 That prodigy — but seen by few —
 Of whom the world astonished spoke,
 As crushed beneath misfortune's yoke ;
 Whose truth and constancy excelled
 All that the world had e'er beheld.
 A gallant youth, who long had known
 The pangs of love, impatient rose,
 And on his camel, all alone,
 Sought for the man of many woes ;
 Anxious to be the first to see
 The man preëminent in misery ;
 And many a farsang¹ he had rode,
 Before he reached the lover's wild abode.

¹ A parasang, a league.

Majnun beheld him from afar,
And sent his vassals to their lair ;
And welcome gave, and asked his name,
And whence the hurrying stranger came.—
“ I come, my friend, to make thee glad ;
I come from beautiful Bagdad.
In that enchanting place I might
Have lived in transport day and night ;
But I have heard thy tender lays,
Thy sorrows, which the world amaze ;
And all that now remains for me
Is, all life long, to dwell with thee.
Thy tuneful strains such joy impart,
Each word is treasured in my heart :
In love, like thee, I weep and sigh —
Let us together live — together die !”
Astonished at this strange desire,

Laughing, the maniac thus replies :—
“ Sir knight ! so soon does pleasure tire ?
And dost thou worldly pomp despise,
And all that luxury can give,
With me in wood and cave to live ?

“ Mistaken youth ! what dost thou know
Of broken hearts — of love like mine —
That thou shouldst life’s sweet joys forego,
And every cheering hope resign ?
I have companions, night and day ;
But forest inmates — beasts of prey ;
Yet do I ask no other — none ;

I'd rather live with them alone.
 What hast thou social seen in me,
 When demons from my presence flee,
 That thou wouldest brave the noontide heat,

The dangers of the midnight air,
 Unsheltered, naked head and feet,
 To herd with one not worth thy care,
 Nor worth a thought? Beneath the scorching sun
 I thread the wild wood, and, when day is done,
 Lay myself down upon a beggar's throne —
 My canopy, the trees — my pillow, a rude stone.
 Houseless and poor, and oft with hunger pressed,
 How can I take a stranger for my guest?
 Whilst thou, surrounded by thy friends at home,
 Moved by no need, but by a whim to roam,
 Mayst pass thy hours in cheerfulness and glee,
 And never think of such a wretch as me ! ”
 The gallant youth now placed in view

Various refreshments he had thither brought —
 Sweet cakes and fruit — and from his pannier drew

Heart-easing wine, his purpose to promote,
 To win the favor of the moon-struck man ;
 And thus his brief but earnest speech began : —
 “ Friend, share my meal in kindness, and allow
 A smile of joy to clear that furrowed brow !
 In bread is life ; it strengthens every part,
 And, while it strengthens, cheers the drooping heart.”
 Majnun rejoined : “ The argument is just ;
 Without refreshment man descends to dust :
 Nerve, power, and strength from nourishment proceed ;

But this is not the nourishment I need.”
“ Yet mortals change, whate’er their aim ;
Nothing on earth remains the same ;
I know thou canst not be unmoved ;
 Forever thus thou canst not be ;
Perpetual change the heavens have proved ;
 And night and morn, successively,
Attest its truth. That thou hast loved
 I know ; but thou mayst yet be free :
The heavens are clothed in deepest gloom ;
Black is the threatening day of doom ;
The clouds fly off, the storm is past,
No longer howls the scattering blast ;
The heavens resume their wonted sheen,
And brighter glows the varied scene :
So grief devours the heart awhile ;
So frowns are followed by a smile :
Like thee was I enchanted, bound,
Girt by love’s galling fetters round ;
But to the winds my grief I flung,
And to my fate no longer clung.
This fire of love, which burns so bright,
What is it but a treacherous light ?
The type of youth ;— when that is o’er,
The burning mountain flames no more !”
But Majnun spurned the traitor-thought, and said :—
“ Speak’st thou to me as one to feeling dead ?
I am myself the king of love ; and now
Glory in my dominion : and wouldest thou
Persuade me to abandon all that Heaven

Has, mid my sufferings, for my solace given,
 To quit that cherished hope, than life more dear,
 Which rivets me to earth, and keeps me here?
 That pure ethereal love, that mystic flower,
 Nurtured in Heaven, fit for an angel's dower?
 What ! from my heart expel the dream of love?
 First from the ocean's bed the sands remove !
 Useless the effort, — useless is thy aim, —
 Thou canst not quench a never dying flame.
 Then cease persuasion. Why to me appear
 A master, teaching, like some holy seer?
 He who aspires to open locks, they say,
 To be successful, first must know the way."
 The youth perceived his error, yet remained
 In friendly converse a few fleeting days ;
 And, by the oracle of love enchained,
 Listened, enraptured, to his varied lays ;
 Companionship delectable ! then rose
 To bid adieu, since there he might not stay,
 And, sorrowing, left the man of many woes,
 Surrounded by his vassal beasts of prey.

XIX.

LAILI'S HUSBAND DIES.

How beautifully blue
 The firmament ! how bright
 The moon is sailing through
 The vast expanse, to-night !

And at this lovely hour
The lonely Laili weeps
Within her prison-tower
And her sad record keeps —

How many days, how many years,
Her sorrows she has borne !
A lingering age of sighs and tears ;
A night that has no morn :
Yet in that guarded tower she lays her head,
Shut like a gem within its stony bed.
And who the warder of that place of sighs ?
Her husband ! — he the dragon-watch supplies.

What words are those which meet her anxious ear ?
Unusual sounds, unusual sights appear ;
Lamps flickering round, and wailings sad and low,
Seem to proclaim some sudden burst of woe.
Beneath her casement rings a wild lament ;
Death-notes disturb the night ; the air is rent
With clamorous voices ; every hope is fled ;
He breathes no longer — Ibn Salam is dead !
The fever's rage had nipped him in his bloom ;
He sank unloved, unpitied, to the tomb.

And Laili marks the moon ; a cloud
Had stained its lucid face ;
The mournful token of a shroud,
End of the humble and the proud,
The grave their resting-place.
And now to her the tale is told,

Her husband's hand and heart are cold :
 And must she mourn the death of one
 Whom she had loathed to look upon ?
 In customary garb arrayed,
 The pomp of grief must be displayed —
 Dishevelled tresses, streaming eyes,
 The heart remaining in disguise —
 She seemed, distraction in her mien,
 To feel her loss, if loss had been ;
 But all the burning tears she shed
 Were for her own Majnun, not for the dead !

The rose that hailed the purple morn,
 All glistening with the balmy dew,
 Looked still more lonely when the thorn
 Had been removed from where it grew.
 But Arab laws had still their claim
 Upon a virtuous widow's fame.
 And what destroyed all chance of blame ?
 Two years to droop behind the screen ;
 Two years unseeing, and unseen !
 No, not a glance in all that time,
 Blooming in life's luxurious prime,
 Was e'er allowed to womankind ;
 Since, but to household faces blind,
 She must at home her vigils keep,
 Her business still to groan and weep.
 And Laili weeps ; but who can tell
 What secrets may her bosom swell ?
 The beauteous eyes in tears may swim,

The heart may throb, but not for him
Who in the grave unconscious sleeps —
Alone for Majnun Laili weeps !
Accustomed hourly to rehearse
Her distant lover's glowing verse,
Framed like a spell to charm and bless,
And soothe her heart's extreme distress.

* * * * *

“O what a night ! a long and dreary night !
It is not night, but darkness without end ;
Awful extinction of ethereal light,
Companionless I sit, without one friend.

“Is the immortal source of light congealed ?
Or has the dreadful day of judgment come ?
Nature's fair form beneath a pall concealed ;
Oh ! what a night of soul-destroying gloom !
Can the shrill wakener of the morn be dead ?
Is the Mowazzin heedless of his trust ?
Has the lone warder from his watch-tower fled,
Or, weary of his task, returned to dust ?

“O God ! restore to me the joyous light
Which first illumed my heart — the golden ray
Of youthful love — that from this prison, night,
I may escape and feel the bliss of day ! ”

Years, days, how slowly they roll on !
And yet, how quickly life is gone !
The future soon becomes the past —
Ceaseless the course of time. At last

The morning came; the king of day
Arose in festival array,
And Laili's night had passed away :
Her morn of beauty o'er her face,
Shining, resumed its wonted grace ;
And with soft step of fairy lightness
She moved, a glittering moon in brightness.
And what was now her highest aim?
The impulse quivering through her frame ?
Her secret love, so long concealed,
She now without a blush revealed.
And first she called her faithful Zyd,
On many a tender mission tried,
In whom her heart could best confide :
“ To-day is not the day of hope,
Which only gives to fancy scope ;
It is the day our hopes completing,
It is the lovers' day of meeting !
Rise up ! the world is full of joy ;
Rise up ! and serve thy mistress, boy ;
Together, where the cypress grows,
Place the red tulip and the rose ;
And let the long-dissevered meet —
Two lovers, in communion sweet.”

* * * * *

THE LOVERS MEET.

They meet ; but how ? hearts long to joy unknown
Know not what 'tis to be, except alone ;
Feeling intense had checked the power to speak ;
Silent confusion sat upon each cheek ;
Speechless with love unutterable, they
Stood gazing at each other all the day.

Thus when a chamber holds no golden store,
No lock protects the ever open door ;
But when rich hoards of gold become a lure,
A lock is placed to keep that wealth secure ;
So when the heart is full, the voice is bound —
For ready speech with grief is rarely found.

Laili, with looks of love, was first who caught
The soft expression of her bursting thought :
“ Alas ! ” she said, as over him she hung,
“ What wondrous grief is this that chains the tongue ?

The bulbul, famed for its mellifluous note,
Without the rose can swell his tuneful throat ;
And when in fragrant bowers the rose he sees,
He warbles sweeter still his ecstasies.

Thou art the bulbul of the bright parterre,
And I the rose—why not thy love declare ?
Why, being absent, whilst unseen by thee,
Arose to heaven thy voice and minstrelsy ?
And now, at length, when we are met, alone,
Thy love has vanished, and thy voice is gone ! ”

A gush of tears to Majnun gave relief :

Words came : “The misery mine, and mine the grief :
 The memory of those lips, so balmy sweet,
 Bound up my tongue, which would their charms repeat.
 When I, a falcon, through the woodlands flew,
 The spotted partridge never met my view ;
 And now when I’m unequal to the flight,
 The long-sought beauteous bird has come in sight :
 The substance thou, in angel charms arrayed,
 And what am I? I know not — but a shade ;
 Without thee nothing. Fancy would enthrone
 Us both together, melted into one ;
 And thus united to each other, we
 Are equal — equal in our constancy :
 Two bodies with one heart and soul the same ;
 Two tapers with one pure celestial flame ;
 Of the same essence formed, together joined,
 Two drops in one, each soul to each resigned.”

He paused, and with ineffable delight,
 Laili gazed on his glowing countenance,
 So long estranged and hidden from her sight.

Now throbs his heart at every fondling glance :
 The fragrance of her ringlets which enwreath
 Her smooth round neck, her jasmine-scented breath,
 The sweet confession of her tremulous eyes,
 The ardent love which time and chance defies,
 The chin of dimpled sweetness, the soft cheek,
 The open ruby lips prepared to speak,
 Madden his finer feelings, and again
 A sudden tempest rushes through his brain ;
 Furious he gazes round him for a while,

Then looks at Laili with a ghastly smile ;
Rends off his Jama-dress in frantic mood,
Starts, as with more than human force endued,
And, shouting, hurries to the desert plain,
Followed by all his savage vassal train.

* * * * *

LAILI DIES.

His love was chaste and pure as heaven :
But by excess to madness driven,
Visions of rapture filled his soul ;
His thoughts sublime despised control ;
A joy allied to joys above
Was mingled with his dreamy love :
O Majnun ! lost, forever gone ;
The world is full of love, but none,
None ever bowed at beauty's shrine
With such a sinless soul as thine.

* * * * *

In summer all is bright and gay ;
In autumn verdure fades away,
The trees assume a sickly hue,
Unnourished by the fragrant dew ;
The genial sap, through numerous rills,
From root and branch and leaf distils ;
But, drying in the chilly air,
The groves become despoiled and bare ;
Sapless, the garden's flowery pride

The winds disperse on every side,
 And all that sight and smell delighted
 Is by the ruthless season blighted.
 So Laili's summer hours have passed ;
 And now she feels the autumnal blast ;
 Her bowers, her blooming bowers, assailed,
 The perfume of the rose exhaled,
 Its withered leaves bestrew the ground,
 And desolation reigns around :
 For from the moment she beheld
 Her lover's mental state unveiled,
 Her heart no consolation knew,
 Deprived of hope's refreshing dew.
 Ere that o'erwhelming misery came,
 Thoughts of new life upheld her frame :
 Amidst her bitterest weeping and distress,
 Mid the dark broodings of her loneliness,
 Though crushed her feelings, and the man she loved
 A wanderer of the forest, strangely moved,
 Still was there hope, still was her mental gaze
 Fixed on the expected joys of after-days.
 But now all hope had perished ! — she had seen
 The frenzied workings of that noble mien :
 The fit delirious, the appalling start,
 And grief and terror seized her trembling heart.
 No tears she sheds, but pines¹ away

¹ Nizami is here rather undignified, but only, perhaps, according to our European notions. Literally, That beautiful cypress tree became as thin as a toothpick ! "As slender as the new moon" is the usual simile.

In deep entire despair ;
The worm has seized its destined prey,
 The blight is on that face so fair,
And fearful symptoms of a swift decay
Come o'er her delicate frame, that in the strife
She almost sinks beneath the load of life.
Feeling the ebbing of the vital tide,
She calls her weeping mother to her side.
“ Mother ! my hour is come, thou need'st no longer
 chide ;
For now no longer can my heart conceal
What once 'twas useless to reveal ;
Yet, spite of thy affection, thou
Mayst blame my fatal passion now.
But I have in my rapture quaffed
Poison in love's delicious draught ;
And feel the agony which sears
The soul, and dries the source of tears.
O mother ! mother ! all I crave,
When I am pillow'd in my grave,
Is that the anguish-stricken youth,
Whose wondrous constancy and truth
Blended our souls in one, may come
And weep upon his Laili's tomb.
Forbid him not ; but let him there
Pour forth the flood of his despair,
And no unhallowed step intrude
Upon his sacred solitude.
For he to me, my life, my stay,
Was precious as the light of day.

Amazing was his love, sublime,
 Which mocked the wonted power of time ;
 And when thou seest him grovelling near,
 Wildly lamenting o'er my bier,
 Frown not, but kindly, soothingly relate
 Whate'er thou knowest of my disastrous fate.
 Say to that woe-worn wanderer, — ‘ All is o'er ;
 Laili, thy own sad friend, is now no more ;
 From this world's heavy chains forever free,
 To thee her heart was given — she died for thee !
 With love so blended was her life, so true
 That glowing love, no other joy she knew.
 No worldly cares her thoughts had e'er oppressed ;
 The love of thee alone disturbed her rest ;
 And in that love her gentle spirit passed,
 Breathing on thee her blessing to the last.’ ”

The mournful mother gazed upon her child,
 Now voiceless — though her lips imploring smiled ;
 Saw the dread change, the sudden pause of breath —
 Her beauty settled in the trance of death ;¹
 And, in the frenzy of her anguish, tore
 Her hoary locks, the 'broidered dress she wore ;
 Dissolved in tears, her wild and sorrowing cries
 Brought down compassion from the weeping skies ;

¹ Richardson has observed, in the dissertation prefixed to his Arabic and Persian dictionary : “ Dying for love is considered among us as a mere poetic figure; and we certainly can support the reality by few examples; but in Eastern countries it seems to be something more; many words in the Arabic and Persian languages, which express love, implying also melancholy, madness, and death.” Majnun, for instance, signifies furious, frantic, mad.

And so intense her grief, she shivering fell
Prostrate upon the corse, insensible,
And never, never rose again — the thread
Of life was broke — both, clasped together, dead !

* * * * *

MAJNUN DIES.

O world ! how treacherous thou art !
With angel form and demon's heart ;
A rosary of beads in hand,
And, covertly, a trenchant brand.
The rolling heavens with azure glow,
But storms o'erwhelm our hopes below ;
The ship is tossed upon the shore,
The wanderer meets his friends no more ;
On flowery field, or boisterous wave,
Alike is found a yawning grave ;
For formless, riding through the air,
Devouring death is everywhere ;
Khosru, and Kai-kobad, and Jum,
Have all descended to the tomb ;
And who, composed of mortal clay,
The universal doom can stay ?
For this, in vain, have youth and age
Pondered o'er learning's mystic page ;
No human power can penetrate
The mysteries of all-ruling fate ;
Frail life is but a moment's breath ;
The world, alas ! is full of death.

How many wept that fair one, gone so soon !
 How many wept o'er that departed moon ! —
 How many mourned with broken hearts for her !
 How many bathed with tears her sepulchre !
 Round her pure dust assembled old and young,
 And on the sod their fragrant offerings flung ;
 Hallowed the spot where amorous youth and maid
 In after-times their dutious homage paid.

Again it was the task of faithful Zyd,
 Through far-extending plain and forest wide,
 To seek the man of many woes, and tell
 The fate of her, alas ! he loved so well,
 Loved, doted on, until his mind, o'erwrought
 Was crushed beneath intolerable thought.

— With bleeding heart he found his lone abode,
 Watering with tears the path on which he rode,
 And beating his sad breast, Majnun perceived
 His friend approach, and asked him why he grieved ;
 What withering sorrow on his cheek had preyed,
 And why in melancholy black¹ arrayed.
 “ Alas ! ” he cried, “ the hail has crushed my bowers ;
 A sudden storm has blighted all my flowers ;
 Thy cypress tree o'erthrown, the leaves are sear ;
 The moon has fallen from her lucid sphere ;
 Laili is dead ! ” No sooner was the word
 Uttered, no sooner the dread tidings heard,

¹ Literally, Why hast thou put on a black upper-garment ? The usual mourning of Mohammedans is green.

Than Majnun, sudden as the lightning's stroke
Sank on the ground, unconscious, with the shock,
And there lay motionless, as if his life
Had been extinguished in that mortal strife.
But, soon recovering, he prepared to rise,
Rewakened frenzy glaring in his eyes,
And, starting on his feet, a hollow groan
Burst from his heart. “Now, now, I *am* alone !
Why hast thou harrowing words like these expressed ?
Why hast thou plunged a dagger in my breast ?
Away ! away !” The savage beasts around,
In a wide circle crouched upon the ground,
Wondering looked on, whilst furiously he rent
His tattered garments, and his loud lament
Rang through the echoing forest. Now he threads
The mazes of the shadowy wood, which spreads
Perpetual gloom, and now emerges where
Nor bower nor grove obstructs the fiery air ;
Climbs to the mountain's brow, o'er hill and plain
Urged quicker onward by his burning brain,
Across the desert's arid boundary hies ;
Zyd, like his shadow, following where he flies ;
And when the tomb of Laili meets his view,
Prostrate he falls, the ground his tears bedew ;
Rolling distraught, he spreads his arm to clasp
The sacred temple, writhing like an asp :
Despair and horror swell his ceaseless moan,
And still he clasps the monumental stone.
“Alas !” he cries — “No more shall I behold
That angel face, that form of heavenly mould.

She was the rose I cherished — but a gust
Of blighting wind has laid her in the dust.
She was my favorite cypress, full of grace,
But death has snatched her from her biding-place.
The tyrant has deprived me of the flower
I planted in my own sequestered bower ;
The basil sweet, the choicest ever seen,
Cruelly torn and scattered o'er the green.
O beauteous flower ! nipped by the winter's cold,
Gone from a world thou never didst behold.
O bower of joy ! with blossoms fresh and fair,
But doomed, alas ! no ripened fruit to bear.
Where shall I find thee now, in darkness shrouded !
Those eyes of liquid light forever clouded !
Where those carnation lips, that musky mole
Upon thy cheek, that treasure of the soul !
Though hidden from my view those charms of thine,
Still do they bloom in this fond heart of mine ;
Though far removed from all I held so dear,
Though all I loved on earth be buried here,
Remembrance to the past enchantment gives,
Memory, blest memory, in my heart still lives.
Yes ! thou hast quitted this contentious life,
This scene of endless treachery and strife ;
And I like thee shall soon my fetters burst,
And quench in draughts of heavenly love my thirst :
There, where angelic bliss can never cloy,
We soon shall meet in everlasting joy ;
The taper of our souls, more clear and bright,
Will then be lustrous with immortal light ! ”

He ceased, and from the tomb to which he clung
Suddenly to a distance wildly sprung,
And, seated on his camel, took the way
Leading to where his father's mansion lay ;
His troop of vassal beasts, as usual, near,
With still unchanged devotion, front and rear ;
Yet, all unconscious, reckless where he went ;
The sport of passion, on no purpose bent,
He sped along, or stopped ; the woods and plains
Resounding with his melancholy strains ;
Such strains as from a broken spirit flow,
The wailings of unmitigable woe ;
But the same frenzy which had fired his mind
Strangely to leave his Laili's grave behind,
Now drove him back, and with augmented grief,
All sighs and tears, and hopeless of relief,
He flings himself upon the tomb again,
As if he there forever would remain
Fatally mingled with the dust beneath,
The young, the pure, the beautiful in death.
Closely he strained the marble to his breast,
A thousand kisses eagerly impressed,
And knocked his forehead in such desperate mood,
The place around him was distained with blood.

Alone, unseen ; his vassals keep remote
Curious intruders from that sacred spot ;
Alone, with wasted form and sombre eyes,
Groaning in anguish he exhausted lies ;
No more life's joys or miseries will he meet,
Nothing to rouse him from this last retreat ;

Upon a sinking gravestone he is laid,
The gates already opening for the dead !

Selim, the generous, who had twice before
Sought his romantic refuge, to implore
The wanderer to renounce the life he led,
And shun the ruin bursting o'er his head,
Again explored the wilderness, again
Crossed craggy rock, deep glen, and dusty plain,
To find his new abode. A month had passed
Mid mountain wild, when, turning back, at last
He spied the wretched sufferer alone,
Stretched on the ground, his head upon a stone.
Majnun, up-gazing, recognized his face,
And bade his growling followers give him place ;
Then said : " Why art thou here again, since thou
Left me in wrath ? What are thy wishes now ?
I am a wretch bowed down with bitterest woe,
Doomed the extremes of misery to know,
Whilst thou, in affluence born, in pleasure nursed,
Stranger to ills the direst and the worst,
Can never join, unless in mockery,
With one so lost to all the world as me ! "

Selim replied : " Fain would I change thy will,
And bear thee hence, — be thy companion still :
Wealth shall be thine, and peace and social joy,
And tranquil days, no sorrow to annoy ;
And she for whom thy soul has yearned so long
May yet be gained, and none shall do thee wrong."

— Deeply he groaned, and wept : " No more, no more !
Speak not of her whose memory I adore ;

She whom I loved, than life itself more dear,
My friend, my angel bride, is buried here !
Dead ! — but her spirit's now in heaven, whilst I
Live, and am dead with grief — yet do not die.
This is the fatal spot, my Laili's tomb, —
This the lamented place of martyrdom.
Here lies my life's sole treasure, life's sole trust ;
All that was bright in beauty gone to dust ! ”

Selim before him in amazement stood,
Stricken with anguish, weeping tears of blood ;
And consolation blandly tried to give.
What consolation ? Make his Laili live ?
His gentle words and looks were only found
To aggravate the agonizing wound ;
And weeks in fruitless sympathy had passed,
But, patient still, he lingered to the last ;
Then, with an anxious heart, of hope bereft,
The melancholy spot, reluctant, left.

The life of Majnun had received its blight ;
His troubled day was closing fast in night.
Still weeping, bitter, bitter tears he shed,
As grovelling in the dust his hands he spread
In holy prayer. “ O God ! Thy servant hear !

And in Thy gracious mercy set him free
From the afflictions which oppress him here.

That, in the Prophet's name, he may return to Thee ! ”
Thus murmuring on the tomb he laid his head,
And with a sigh his wearied spirit fled.

* * * * *

And he, too, has performed his pilgrimage.

And who, existing on this earthly stage,
But follows the same path? whate'er his claim
To virtue, honor,—worthy praise, or blame ;
So will he answer at the judgment throne,
Where secrets are unveiled, and all things known ;
Where felon deeds of darkness meet the light,
And goodness wears its crown with glory bright.
Majnun, removed from this tumultuous scene,
Which had to him unceasing misery been,
At length slept on the couch his bride possessed,
And, wakening, saw her mingled with the blessed.
There still lay stretched his body, many a day,
Protected by his faithful beasts of prey ;
Whose presence filled with terror all around,
Who sought to know where Majnun might be found :
Listening they heard low murmurs on the breeze,
Now loud and mournful, like the hum of bees ;
But still supposed him seated in his place,
Watched by those sentinels of the savage race.
—A year had passed, and still their watch they
kept,
As if their sovereign was not dead, but slept :
Some had been called away, and some had died —
At last the smouldering relics were despaired ;
And when the truth had caught the breath of fame,
Assembled friends from every quarter came ;
Weeping, they washed his bones, now silvery white,
With ceaseless tears performed the funeral rite,
And, opening the incumbent tablet wide,
Mournfully laid him by his Laili's side.

One promise bound their faithful hearts — one bed
Of cold, cold earth united them when dead.
Severed in life, how cruel was their doom !
Ne'er to be joined but in the silent tomb !

The minstrel's legend chronicle
Which on their woes delights to dwell,
Their matchless purity and faith,
And how their dust was mixed in death,
Tells how the sorrow-stricken Zyd
Saw, in a dream, the beauteous bride,
With Majnun, seated side by side.
In meditation deep, one night,
The other world flashed on his sight
With endless vistas of delight —
The world of spirits ; — as he lay
Angels appeared in bright array,
Circles of glory round them gleaming,
Their eyes with holy rapture beaming ;
He saw the ever verdant bowers,
With golden fruit and blooming flowers ;
The bulbul heard, their sweets among,
Warbling his rich mellifluous song ;
The ring-dove's murmuring, and the swell
Of melody from harp and shell :
He saw within a rosy glade,
Beneath a palm's extensive shade,
A throne, amazing to behold,
Studded with glittering gems and gold ;
Celestial carpets near it spread

Close where a lucid streamlet strayed ;
 Upon that throne, in blissful state,
 The long-divided lovers sate,
 Resplendent with seraphic light :—
 They held a cup, with diamonds bright ;
 Their lips, by turns, with nectar wet,
 In pure ambrosial kisses met ;
 Sometimes to each their thoughts revealing,
 Each clasping each with tenderest feeling.

— The dreamer who this vision saw
 Demanded, with becoming awe,
 What sacred names the happy pair
 In Irem-bowers were wont to bear.
 A voice replied : “ That sparkling moon
 Is Laili still — her friend, Majnun ;
 Deprived in your frail world of bliss,
 They reap their great reward in this ! ”

Zyd, wakening from his wondrous dream,
 Now dwelt upon the mystic theme,
 And told to all how faithful love
 Receives its recompense above.

O ye, who thoughtlessly repose
 On what this flattering world bestows,
 Reflect how transient is your stay !
 How soon e'en sorrows fade away !
 The pangs of grief the heart may wring
 In life, but Heaven removes the sting ;
 The world to come makes bliss secure,—
 The world to come, eternal, pure.

What other solace for the human soul,
But everlasting rest — virtue's unvarying goal !

SAKI ! Nizami's strain is sung ;
The Persian poet's pearls are strung ;
Then fill again the goblet high !
Thou wouldst not ask the reveller why ?
Fill to the love that changes never !
Fill to the love that lives forever !
That, purified by earthly woes,
At last with bliss seraphic glows.

RUMI.

JELALU-'D-DIN, the greatest mystical poet of any age, was born at Balkh, in 1207 A.D., and was of an illustrious descent. His mother was of a princely house; his father, Bahau-'d-Din Veled, was a descendant of the Kalif Abu Bekr, and excited the jealousy of the Sultan,¹ who made it so unpleasant for him that he left the city, taking with him his family, the youngest of whom was Jelalu-'d-Din, then five years old. At Naishapur they met the Sufi saint, Attar, who predicted the child's future greatness. "He would," he said, "kindle the fire of divine enthusiasm throughout the world,"² for even as a child Rumi had visions and religious ecstasies.

For years these fugitives travelled extensively through the East, and while in Larenda, in Asia Minor, then called Rum. Jelalu married. This was in 1226 A.D., and after visiting Samarcand and Constantinople, the family finally settled in Qonia, or Konia (the ancient Iconium of the New Testament). Konia is in the old Roman province of Galatia, hence Jelalu's name of Rumi, or the "Roman." Here the poet's father founded a college and here he died in 1231. After his father's death, Rumi, already a great student under his father's careful tuition, studied at Aleppo and Damascus, where he acquired a well-deserved reputation for learning. On his return to Konia he was professor of four different colleges, and received the title of Sultan-al-Ulema, or "Chief and Ruler of the Learned."

Among his spiritual advisers was Shamsi-'d-Din of

¹ Sultan Muhammad, surnamed Kutb-ud-Din of Kharezm.

² Ouseley's *Persian Poets*.

Tabriz, who gained such an influence over the poet that Rumi adopted his name as his takhallus, or poetical nom de plume, under which he wrote his *Divan* or lyrical odes. The people of Konia, disliking the somewhat aggressive characteristics of Shamsi, rose up against him, and in the riot which followed Rumi's eldest son was killed ; and Shamsi must have been executed, for he was never seen again. These tragic events caused Rumi such melancholy that he renounced the world and founded the famous order of Dervishes called the "Maulavis." This order was noted for its piety, mystic dances, and its music and songs, making use of such instruments as the flute, drum, tambourine ; and its members also wore a peculiar mourning costume. The *Masnavi*, Rumi's great mystic poem, is said to have been written by him at the suggestion of an admiring disciple for the spiritual benefit of his order, whose cloisters are found throughout the Turkish Empire.

Rumi died at Konia, December 17, 1273, and was buried in his father's mausoleum at Konia. His son succeeded him as the head of the "Maulavis," the leadership of which has been kept in the poet's family for six hundred years. The dying instructions of Rumi to his son were as follows :—

" My testament is this : that ye be pious toward God, in private and in public ; that ye eat little, sleep little, speak little ;—that ye depart from wickedness and sin ; that ye continue instant in fasting, and steadfast in vigilance ; that ye flee from carnal lusts with all your might ; that ye endure patiently the contumely of the world ; that ye shun the company of the base and foolish, and consort with the noble-hearted and the pious. Verily the best man is he who doeth good to men, and the best speech is that which is short and guideth men aright. Praise be to God who is the Only God."

These precepts were the basis of Rumi's life, judging by

the nature of the work he left behind him. His *Masnavi*, upon which his literary fame rests, is composed of twenty-six thousand couplets arranged in six parts, or books, dealing with Sufi philosophy in a series of stories having spiritual maxims and interpretations ; certain parts of these have been compared to the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Songs of Solomon. As Dante's poem has been called the *Divina*, so in India the *Masnavi* is called the *Ma'navi*, or "Spiritual" ; for it seems to have for its main object the teaching of the "fatherhood of God" and the explanation of the origin of evil. These subjects are approached on the moral side through the principle of love ; believing that the more a man loves the more able he is to understand the divine purposes.

The "song of the reed" is thought to signify the soul's love for God, and its longing to be reunited with Him. At all events it is the keynote of the celebrated *Masnavi*. Among the numerous forms to describe this union of God and man Rumi uses the following exquisite analogue : "There came one and knocked at the door of the Beloved. And a voice answered and said, 'Who is there?' The lover replied, 'It is I.' 'Go hence,' returned the voice, 'there is no room within for thee and me.' Then came the lover a second time and knocked, and again the voice demanded, 'Who is there?' He answered, 'It is thou.' 'Enter,' said the voice, 'for I am within.' "

THE MASNAVI.¹

BOOK I.

“SONG OF THE REED.”²

HEARKEN to the reed-flute, how it discourses
When complaining of the pains of separation —

“ Ever since they tore me from my osier bed,
My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.
I burst my breast, striving to give vent to sighs,
And to express the pangs of my yearning for my home.
He who abides far away from his home
Is ever longing for the day he shall return.
My wailing is heard in every throng,
In concert with them that rejoice and them that weep.
Each interprets my notes in harmony with his own
feelings,
But not one fathoms the secrets of my heart.
My secrets are not alien from my plaintive notes,
Yet they are not manifest to the sensual ear.
Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body,
Yet no man hath ever seen a soul.”

This plaint of the flute is fire, not mere air.
Let him who lacks this fire be accounted dead !
'Tis the fire of love that inspires the flute,³
'Tis the ferment of love that possesses the wine.

¹ Translated by Mr. E. H. Whinfield.

² The late Professor Palmer so called it.

³ Love signifies the strong attraction that draws all creatures back to reunion with their creator.

The flute is the confidant of all unhappy lovers ;
 Yea, its strains lay bare my inmost secrets.
 Who hath seen a poison and an antidote like the flute ?
 Who hath seen a sympathetic consoler like the flute ?
 The flute tells the tale of love's blood-stained path,
 It recounts the story of Majnun's love toils.
 None is privy to these feelings save one distracted,
 As ear inclines to the whispers of the tongue.
 Through grief my days are as labor and sorrow,
 My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.
 Yet, though my days vanish thus, 'tis no matter,
 Do thou abide, O Incomparable Pure One !¹

But all who are not fishes are soon tired of water ;
 And they who lack daily bread find the day very long ;
 So the "Raw" comprehend not the state of the
 "Ripe;"²

Therefore it behooves me to shorten my discourse.

Arise, O son ! burst thy bonds and be free !
 How long wilt thou be captive to silver and gold ?
 Though thou pour the ocean into thy pitcher,
 It can hold no more than one day's store.
 The pitcher of the desire of the covetous never fills,
 The oyster-shell fills not with pearls till it is content ;
 Only he whose garment is rent by the violence of love
 Is wholly pure from covetousness and sin.

Hail to thee, then, O LOVE, sweet madness !

¹ Self-annihilation leads to eternal life in God — the universal Noumenon, by whom all phenomena subsist.

² "Raw" and "Ripe" are terms for "Men of Externals" and "Men of heart" or Mystics.

Thou who healest all our infirmities !
Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit !
Who art our Plato and our Galen !
Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
And makes the very hills to dance with joy !
O lover, 'twas love that gave life to Mount Sinai,
When " it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon."¹
Did my Beloved only touch me with his lips,
I too, like the flute, would burst out in melody.
But he who is parted from them that speak his tongue,
'Though he possess a hundred voices, is perforce dumb.
When the rose has faded and the garden is withered,
The song of the nightingale is no longer to be heard.
The BELOVED is all in all, the lover only veils Him ;²
The BELOVED is all that lives, the lover a dead thing.
When the lover feels no longer LOVE's quickening,
He becomes like a bird who has lost its wings. Alas !
How can I retain my senses about me,
When the BELOVED shows not the light of His counte-
nance ?

LOVE desires that this secret should be revealed,
For if a mirror reflects not, of what use is it ?
Knowest thou why thy mirror reflects not ?
Because the rust has not been scoured from its face.
If it were purified from all rust and defilement,
It would reflect the shining of the SUN of GOD.

¹ Alluding to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Koran vii., 139.

² All phenomenal existences (man included) are but "veils" obscuring the face of the Divine Noumenon, the only real existence, and the moment His sustaining presence is withdrawn, they at once relapse into their original nothingness.

O friends, ye have now heard this tale,
Which sets forth the very essence of my case.

LAILI AND THE KHALIFA.

The Khalifa said to Laili, "Art thou really she
For whom Majnun lost his head and went distracted?
Thou art not fairer than many other fair ones."
She replied, "Be silent; thou art no Majnun!"

If thou hadst Majnun's eyes,
The two worlds would be within thy view.
Thou art in thy senses, but Majnun is beside himself.
In love to be wide awake is treason.
The more a man is awake, the more he sleeps (to love);
His (critical) wakefulness is worse than slumbering.

Our wakefulness fetters our spirits,
Then our souls are a prey to divers whims,
Thoughts of loss and gain and fears of misery.
They retain not purity, nor dignity, nor lustre,
Nor aspiration to soar heavenward.
That one is really sleeping who hankers after each whim
And holds parley with each fancy.

OMAR AND THE AMBASSADOR.¹

The hare, having delivered his companions from the
tyranny of the lion, in the manner just described, pro-
ceeds to improve the occasion by exhorting them to
engage in a greater and more arduous warfare, viz.,
the struggle against their inward enemy, the lusts of

¹ Story vi., Book 1.

the flesh. He illustrates his meaning by the story of an ambassador who was sent by the Emperor of Rum to the Khalifa Omar. On approaching Medina this ambassador inquired for Omar's palace, and learned that Omar dwelt in no material palace, but in a spiritual tabernacle, only visible to purified hearts. At last he discerned Omar lying under a palm tree, and drew near to him in fear and awe. Omar received him kindly, and instructed him in the doctrine of the mystical union with God. The ambassador heard him gladly, and asked him two questions, first, How can souls descend from heaven to earth? and secondly, With what object are souls imprisoned in the bonds of flesh and blood? Omar responded, and the ambassador accepted his teaching, and became a pure-hearted Sufi. The hare urged his companions to abjure lust and pride, and to go and do likewise.

GOD'S AGENCY RECONCILED WITH MAN'S FREEWILL.

The ambassador said, "O Commander of the faithful,
How comes the soul down from above to earth?
How can so noble a bird be confined in a cage?"

He said, "God speaks words of power to souls,—
To things of naught, without eyes or ears,
And at these words they all spring into motion ;
At His words of power these nothings arise quickly,
And strong impulse urges them into existence.
Again, he speaks other spells to these creatures,
And swiftly drives them back again into not-being.

He speaks to the rose's ear, and causes it to bloom ;
 He speaks to the tulip, and makes it blossom.
 He speaks a spell to body, and it becomes a soul ;
 He speaks to the sun, and it becomes a fount of light.
 Again, in its ear He whispers a word of power,
 And its face is darkened as by a hundred eclipses.
 What is it that God says to the ear of earth,
 That it attends thereto and rests steadfast ?
 What is it that Speaker says to the cloud,
 That it pours forth rain-water like a water-skin ?

Whosoever is bewildered by wavering will,
 In his ear hath God whispered His riddle,
 That He may bind him on the horns of a dilemma ;
 For he says, " Shall I do this or its reverse ? "
 Also from God comes the preference of one alternative ;
 'Tis from God's impulsion that man chooses one of the
 two.

If you desire sanity in this embarrassment,
 Stuff not the ear of your mind with cotton.
 Take the cotton of evil suggestions from the mind's
 ear,
 That the heavenly voice from above may enter it,
 That you may understand that riddle of His,
 That you may be cognizant of that open secret.
 Then the mind's ear becomes the sensorium of
 inspiration ;
 For what is this Divine voice but the inward voice ? ¹

¹ The leading principle of all mysticism is that, independently of sense and reason, man possesses an inward sense, or intuition, which conveys to him a knowledge of God by direct apprehension.

The spirit's eye and ear possess this sense,
The eye and ear of reason and sense lack it.
The word " compulsion " makes me impatient for love's
sake; ;
'Tis he who loves not who is fettered by compulsion.
This is close communion with God, not compulsion.
The shining of the sun, and not a dark cloud.
Or, if it be compulsion, 'tis not common compulsion,
It is not the domination of wanton wilfulness.
O son, they understand this compulsion
For whom God opens the eyes of the inner man.
Things hidden and things future are plain to them;
To speak of the past seems to them despicable.
They possess freewill and compulsion besides,
As in oyster-shells raindrops become pearls.
Outside the shell they are raindrops, great and small;
Inside they are precious pearls, big and little.
These men also resemble the musk-deer's bag;
Outside it is blood, but inside pure musk;
Yet, say not that outside 'twas mere blood,
Which on entering the bag becomes musk.
Nor say that outside the alembic 'twas mere copper,
And becomes gold inside, when mixed with elixir.
In your freewill and compulsion are vain fancies,
But in them they are the light of Almighty power.
On the table bread is a mere lifeless thing,
When taken into the body it is a life-giving spirit.
This transmutation occurs not in the table's heart,
'Tis soul effects this transmutation with water of life.
Such is the power of the soul, O man of right views'

Then what is the power of the Soul of souls? (God).
 Bread is the food of the body, yet consider
 How can it be the food of the soul, O son?
 Flesh-born man by force of soul
 Cleaves mountains with tunnels and mines.
 The might of Ferhad's soul cleft a hill ;
 The might of the Soul's soul cleaves the moon.¹
 If the heart opens the mouth of mystery's store,
 The soul springs up swiftly to highest heaven.
 If tongue discourses of hidden mysteries,
 It kindles a fire that consumes the world.

Behold, then, God's action and man's action ;
 Know, action does belong to us ; this is evident.
 If no action proceeded from men,
 How could you say, "Why act ye thus?"
 The agency of God is the cause of our action,
 Our actions are the signs of God's agency ;
 Nevertheless our actions are freely willed by us,
 Whence our recompense is either hell or "The Friend."

THE VAKIL OF THE PRINCE OF BOKHARA.²

The prince of Bokhara had a Vakil who, through fear of punishment for an offence he had committed, ran away and remained concealed in Kuhistan and the desert for the space of ten years. At the end of that time, being unable to endure absence from his lord and his home any longer, he determined to return to

¹ As a sign of the last day. Koran liv., 1.

² Story xvii., Book iii.

Bokhara and throw himself at his lord's feet, and endure whatever punishment his lord might be pleased to inflict upon him. His friends did all they could to dissuade him, assuring him that the Prince's wrath was still hot against him, and that if he appeared at Bokhara he would be put to death, or at least imprisoned for the rest of his life. He replied, "O advisers, be silent, for the force of the love which is drawing me to Bokhara is stronger than the force of prudent counsels. When love pulls one way all the wisdom of Abu Hanifa and Ash-Shafi'i is impotent to withstand it. If it shall please my lord to slay me, I will yield up my life without reluctance, for this life of estrangement from him which I am now leading is the same as death, and release from it will be eternal happiness. I will return to Bokhara and throw myself at my lord's feet, and say to him, 'Deal with me as thou wilt, for I can no longer bear absence from thee, and life or death at thy hands is all the same to me !'" Accordingly, he journeyed back to Bokhara, counting the very toils and discomforts of the road sweet and delightful, because they were steps in his homeward course. When he reached Bokhara his friends and relations all warned him not to show himself, as the Prince was still mindful of his offence and bent on punishing him ; but he replied to them as to his other advisers, that he was utterly regardless of his life, and was resolved to commit himself to his lord's good pleasure. He then went to the court and threw himself at his lord's feet and swooned away. The Prince,

seeing the strong affection borne to him by his repentant servant, conceived a similar affection toward him, and descended from his throne and graciously raised him from the ground, and pardoned his offence. Thus it is that eternal life is gained by utter abandonment of one's own life. When God appears to His ardent lover the lover is absorbed in Him, and not so much as a hair of the lover remains. True lovers are as shadows, and when the sun shines in glory the shadows vanish away. He is a true lover of God to whom God says, "I am thine, and thou art mine!"

In the course of this story, which is narrated at great length, are introduced anecdotes of a lover and his mistress, of the Virgin Mary being visited by the "Blessed Spirit" or Angel Gabriel,¹ of the fatal mosque, of Galen's devotion to carnal learning, of Satan's treachery to the men of Mecca at the battle of Bedr,² and of Solomon and the gnat. There also occur comments on various texts, and a curious comparison of the trials and wholesome afflictions of the righteous to the boiling of pot-herbs in a saucepan by the cook.

THE REPLY OF THE LOVER WHEN ASKED BY HIS MISTRESS WHICH CITY OF ALL THOSE HE HAD SEEN WAS MOST PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT.

A damsel said to her lover, "O fond youth,
You have visited many cities in your travels;
Which of those cities seems most delightful to you?"

¹ Koran xix., 18.

² Koran viii., 10.

He made answer, “ The city wherein my love dwells.
In whatever nook my queen alights,
Though it be as the eye of a needle, 'tis a wide plain ;
Wherever her Yusuf-like face shines as a moon,
Though it be the bottom of a well, 'tis Paradise.
With thee, my love, hell itself were heaven.
With thee a prison would be a rose-garden.
With thee hell would be a mansion of delight,
Without thee lilies and roses would be as flames of
fire !”

THE ANSWER OF THE VAKIL TO THOSE WHO ADVISED
HIM NOT TO COURT DEATH BY YIELDING HIMSELF
UP TO HIS LORD.

He said, “ I am a drawer of water ; water attracts me,
Even though I know water may be my death.
No drawer of water flees from water,
Even though it may cause him a hundred deaths.
Though it may make my hand and belly dropsical,
My love for water will never be lessened ;
I should say, when they asked me about my belly,
'Would that the ocean might flow into it !'
Though the bottle of my belly were burst with water,
And though I should die, my death would be acceptable.
Wheresoever I see one seeking water, I envy him,
And cry, 'Would I were in his place !'
My hand is a tabor and my belly a drum,
Like the rose I beat the drum of love of water.

Like the earth or like a foetus I devour blood,
 Since I became a lover this is my occupation.
 If that 'Faithful Spirit' should shed my blood,
 I would drink it up drop by drop like the earth.
 At night I boil on the fire like a cooking-pot,
 From morn till eve I drink blood like the sand.
 It repents me that I planned a stratagem,
 And that I fled from before his wrath.
 Tell him to sate his wrath on my poor life,
 He is the 'Feast of Sacrifice,' and I his loving cow.¹
 The cow, whether it eats or sleeps,
 Thinks of naught but sacrificing itself.
 Know me to be that cow of Moses which gave its life,
 Each part of me gives life to the righteous.
 That cow of Moses was made a sacrifice,
 And its least part became a source of life.
 That murdered man leapt up from his deadness
 At the words, 'Strike the corpse with part of her.'²
 O pious ones, slay the cow (of lust),
 If ye desire true life of soul and spirit !
 I died as a mineral and arose a plant,
 I died as a plant and rose again an animal.³
 I died as an animal and arose a man.
 Why then should I fear to become less by dying ?

¹ The Id ul Azha, or the Feast of Sacrifices, held on the tenth day of the month Zul Hijja. It is also called "The Cow Festival."

² This refers to Koran ii., 63. The cow was to be sacrificed in order that a murderer might be discovered by striking the corpse with a piece of her flesh.

³ *I.e.*, Earth losing its own form becomes vegetable, vegetable again perishes to feed and be transmuted into animal, and in like manner animal becomes man.

I shall die once again as a man
To rise an angel perfect from head to foot !
Again when I suffer dissolution as an angel,
I shall become what passes the conception of man !
Let me then become non-existent, for non-existence
Sings to me in organ tones, ‘To him shall we return.’¹
Know death to be the gathering together of the people,
The water of life is hidden in the land of darkness.
Like a water-lily seek life there !
Yea, like that drawer of water, at the risk of life,
Water will be his death, yet he still seeks water,
And still drinks on,— and God knows what is right.
O lover, cold-hearted and void of loyalty,
Who from fear for your life shun the beloved !
O base one, behold a hundred thousand souls
Dancing toward the deadly sword of his love :
Behold water in a pitcher ; pour it out ;
Will that water run away from the stream ?
When that water joins the water of the stream
It is lost therein, and becomes itself the stream.
Its individuality is lost, but its essence remains,
And hereby it becomes not less nor inferior.
I will hang myself upon my lord’s palm tree
In excuse for having fled away from him !”

Even as a ball rolling along on head and face,
He fell at the feet of the Prince with streaming eyes.
The people were all on the alert, expecting
That the Prince would burn him or hang him,

¹ Koran ii., 153: “Verily we are God’s, and to Him shall we return.”

Saying, "Moth-like he has seen the blaze of the light,
And fool-like has plunged therein and lost his life."
But the torch of love is not like that torch,
'Tis light, light in the midst of light,
'Tis the reverse of torches of fire,
It appears to be fire, but is all sweetness.

LOVE GENERATES LOVE. "IF YE LOVE GOD, GOD WILL
LOVE YOU."¹

That Bokharian then cast himself into the flame,
But his love made the pain endurable ;
And as his burning sighs ascended to heaven,
The love of the Prince was kindled toward him.

* * * * *

The heart of man is like the root of a tree,
Therefrom grow the leaves on firm branches.²
Corresponding to that root grow up branches
As well on the tree as on souls and intellects.
The tops of the perfect trees reach the heavens,
The roots firm, and the branches in the sky.
Since then the tree of love has grown up to heaven,
How shall it not also grow in the heart of the Prince ?
A wave washes away the remembrance of the sin from
his heart,
For from each heart is a window to other hearts ;
Since in each heart there is a window to other hearts,

¹ Koran iii., 29.

² "Seest thou not to what God liketh a good word ? To a good tree, its root firmly fixed, and its branches in the heaven." Koran xiv., 29.

They are not separated and shut off like two bodies.
Thus, even though two lamp-dishes be not joined,
Yet their light is united in a single ray.
No lover ever seeks union with his beloved,
But his beloved is also seeking union with him.
But the lover's love makes his body lean,
While the beloved's love makes hers fair and lusty.
When in *this* heart the lightning spark of love arises,
Be sure this love is reciprocated in *that* heart.
When the love of God arises in thy heart,
Without doubt God also feels love for thee.

The noise of clapping of hands is never heard
From one of thy hands unaided by the other hand.
The man athirst cries, "Where is delicious water?"
Water too cries, "Where is the water-drinker?"
This thirst in my soul is the attraction of the water;
I am the water's and the water is mine.
God's wisdom in His eternal foreknowledge and
decree

Made us to be lovers one of the other.
Nay more, all the parts of the world by this decree
Are arranged in pairs, and each loves its mate.
Every part of the world desires its mate,
Just as amber attracts blades of straw.
Heaven says to earth, "All hail to thee!
We are related to one another as iron and magnet."
Heaven is man and earth woman in character;
Whatever heaven sends it, earth cherishes.
When earth lacks heat, heaven sends heat;
When it lacks moisture and dew, heaven sends them.

The earthy sign¹ succors the terrestrial earth,
 The watery sign (Aquarius) sends moisture to it ;
 The windy sign sends the clouds to it,
 To draw off unwholesome exhalations.
 The fiery sign (Leo) sends forth the heat of the sun,
 Like a dish heated red-hot in front and behind.
 The heaven is busily toiling through ages,
 Just as men labor to provide food for women.
 And the earth does the woman's work, and toils
 In bearing offspring and suckling them.
 Know then earth and heaven are endued with sense,
 Since they act like persons endued with sense.
 If these two lovers did not suck nutriment from each
 other,
 Why should they creep together like man and wife ?
 Without the earth how could roses and saffron grow ?
 For naught can grow from the sole heat and rain of
 heaven.
 This is the cause of the female seeking the male,
 That the work of each may be accomplished.
 God has instilled mutual love into man and woman,
 That the world may be perpetuated by their union.

* * * * *

Earth says to the earth of the body, "Come away,
 Quit the soul and come to me as dust.
 Thou art of my *genus*, and wilt be better with me,
 Thou hadst better quit the soul and fly to me !"
 Body replies, "True, but my feet are fast bound,
 Though like thee I suffer from separation."

¹ *I.e.* of the Zodiac.

Water calls out to the moisture of the body,
“ O moisture, return to me from your foreign abode ! ”
Fire also calls out to the heat of the body,
“ Thou art of fire ; return to thy root ! ”

In the body there are seventy-and-two diseases ;
It is ill compacted owing to the struggle of its elements.
Disease comes to rend the body asunder,
And to drag apart its constituent elements.
The four elements are as birds tied together by the
feet ;

Death, sickness, and disease loose their feet asunder.
The moment their feet are loosed from the others,
The bird of each element flies off by itself.
The repulsion of each of these principles and causes
Inflicts every moment a fresh pang on our bodies.
That it may dissolve these composite bodies of ours,
The bird of each part tries to fly away to its origin ;
But the wisdom of God prevents this speedy end,
And preserves their union till the appointed day.
He says, “ O parts, the appointed time is not yet ;
It is useless for you to take wing before that day.”

But as each part desires reunion with its original,
How is it with the soul who is a stranger in exile ?
It says, “ O parts of my habitation here below,
My absence is sadder than yours, as I am heaven-born
The body loves green pastures and running water,
For this cause that its origin is from them.
The love of the soul is for life and the living one,
Because its origin is the Soul not bound to place.
The love of the soul is for wisdom and knowledge,

That of the body for houses, gardens, and vineyards ;
 The love of the soul is for things exalted on high,
 That of the body for acquisition of goods and food.
 The love too of Him on high is directed to the soul :
 Know this for ‘He loves them that love Him.’¹
 The sum is this, that whoso seeks another,
 The soul of that other who is sought inclines to him.

* * * * *

Let us quit the subject. — Love for that soul athirst
 Was kindled in the breast of the Prince of Bokhara.
 The smoke of that love and the grief of that burning
 heart
 Ascended to his master and excited his compassion.

THE PRAISES ADDRESSED TO THE PRINCE BY THE VAKIL.

He said, “O phœnix of God and goal of the spirit,
 I thank thee that thou hast come back from Mount
 Qaf !

O Israfil of the resurrection-day of love,
 O love, love, and heart’s desire of love !

Let thy first boon to me be this,
 To lend thine ear to my orisons.

Though thou knowest my condition clearly,
 O protector of slaves, listen to my speech.

A thousand times, O prince incomparable,
 Has my reason taken flight in desire to see thee,
 And to hear thee and to listen to thy words,

¹ Koran v., 59.

And to behold thy life-giving smiles.
Thy inclining thine ear to my supplications
Is as a caress to my misguided soul.
The baseness of my heart's coin is known to thee,
But thou hast accepted it as genuine coin.
Thou art proud toward the arrogant and proud ;
All clemencies are as naught to thy clemency.
First hear this, that while I remained in absence,
First and last alike escaped me.
Secondly , hear this, O prince beloved,
That I searched much, but found no second to thee.
Thirdly, that when I had departed outside thee,
I said it was like the Christian Trinity.¹
Fourthly, when my harvest was burned up,
I knew not the fourth from the fifth.
Wheresoever thou findest blood on the roads,
Trace it, and 'tis tears of blood from my eyes.
My words are thunder, and these sighs and tears
Are drawn by it as rain from the clouds.
I am distracted between speaking and weeping.
Shall I weep, or shall I speak, or what shall I do ?
If I speak, my weeping ceases ;
If I weep, I cease to praise and magnify thee."

He spoke thus, and then fell to weeping,
So that high and low wept with him.
So many "Ahs" and "Alases" proceeded from his
heart,
That the people of Bokhara formed a circle round him.

¹ "They surely are infidels who say, 'God is the third of three,' for there is no God but one God." Koran v., 77.

Talking sadly, weeping sadly, smiling sadly,
 Men and women, small and great, were all assembled.
 The whole city wept in concert with him ;
 Men and women mingled together as on the last day.
 Then Heaven said to Earth,
 “ If you never saw a resurrection-day, see it here ! ”
 Reason was amazed, saying, “ What love, what ecstasy !
 Is his separation more wondrous, or his reunion ? ”

THE THREE FISHES.¹

This story, which is taken from the book of Kalila and Damnah,² is as follows. There was in a secluded place a lake, which was fed by a running stream, and in this lake were three fishes, one very wise, the second half wise, and the third foolish. One day some fishermen passed by that lake, and having espied the fish, hastened home to fetch their nets. The fish also saw the fishermen and were sorely disquieted. The very wise fish, without a minute's delay, quitted the lake and took refuge in the running stream which communicated with it, and thus escaped the impending danger. The half wise fish delayed doing anything till the fishermen actually made their appearance with their nets. He then floated upon the surface of the water, pretending to be dead, and the fishermen took him up and threw him into the stream, and by this device he saved his life. But the foolish fish did noth-

¹ Book iv., Story v.

² Anvar i Suhaili, Book i., Story xv.

ing but swim wildly about, and was taken and killed by the fishermen.

THE MARKS OF THE WISE MAN, OF THE HALF WISE, AND OF THE FOOL.

The wise man is he who possesses a torch of his own ;
He is the guide and leader of the caravan.
That leader is his own director and light ;
That illuminated one follows his own lead.
He is his own protector ; do ye also seek protection
From that light whereon his soul is nurtured.
The second, he, namely, who is half wise,
Knows the wise man to be the light of his eyes.
He clings to the wise man like a blind man to his
guide,
So as to become possessed of the wise man's sight.
But the fool, who has no particle of wisdom,
Has no wisdom of his own, and quits the wise man.
He knows nothing of the way, great or small,
And is ashamed to follow the footsteps of the guide.
He wanders into the boundless desert,
Sometimes halting and despairing, sometimes running.
He has no lamp wherewith to light himself on his way,
Nor half a lamp which might recognize and seek light.
He lacks wisdom, so as to boast of being alive,
And also half wisdom, so as to assume to be dead.
That half-wise one became as one utterly dead
In order to rise up out of his degradation.
If you lack perfect wisdom, make yourself as dead

Under the shadow of the wise, whose words give life.
The fool is neither alive so as to companion with 'Isa,
Nor yet dead so as to feel the power of 'Isa's breath.
His blind soul wanders in every direction,
And at last makes a spring, but springs not upward.

THE COUNSELS OF THE BIRD.

A man captured a bird by wiles and snares ;
The bird said to him, " O noble sir,
In your time you have eaten many oxen and sheep,
And likewise sacrificed many camels ;
You have never become satisfied with their meat,
So you will not be satisfied with my flesh.
Let me go, that I may give you three counsels,
Whence you will see whether I am wise or foolish.
The first of my counsels shall be given on your wrist,
The second on your well-plastered roof,
And the third I will give you from the top of a tree.
On hearing all three you will deem yourself happy.
As regards the counsel on your wrist, 'tis this,—
' Believe not foolish assertions of any one ! ' "
When he had spoken this counsel on his wrist, he flew
Up to the top of the roof, entirely free.
Then he said, " Do not grieve for what is past ;
When a thing is done, vex not yourself about it."
He continued, " Hidden inside this body of mine
Is a precious pearl, ten drachms in weight.
That jewel of right belonged to you,
Wealth for yourself and prosperity for your children.

You have lost it, as it was not fated you should get it,
That pearl whose like can nowhere be found."

Thereupon the man, like a woman in her travail,
Gave vent to lamentations and weeping.

The bird said to him, "Did I not counsel you, saying,
'Beware of grieving over what is past and gone'?"

When 'tis past and gone, why sorrow for it?

Either you understood not my counsel or are deaf.

The first counsel I gave you was this, namely,
'Be not misguided enough to believe foolish assertions.'

O fool, altogether I do not weigh three drachms,
How can a pearl of ten drachms be within me?"

The man recovered himself and said, "Well then,
Tell me now your third good counsel!"

The bird replied, "You have made a fine use of the
others,

That I should waste my third counsel upon you!

To give counsel to a sleepy ignoramus

Is to sow seeds upon salt land.

Torn garments of folly and ignorance cannot be
patched.

O counsellors, waste not the seed of counsel on them!"

POEMS.¹

I.

HE comes, a moon whose like the sky ne'er saw, awake
or dreaming,
Crowned with eternal flame no flood can lay.
Lo, from the flagon of thy love, O Lord, my soul is
swimming,
And ruined all my body's house of clay !

When first the Giver of the grape my lonely heart be-
friended,
Wine fired my bosom and my veins filled up,
But when his image all mine eye possessed, a voice
descended :
“ Well done, O sovereign Wine and peerless Cup ! ”

Love's mighty arm from roof to base each dark abode
is hewing
Where chinks reluctant catch a golden ray.
My heart, when Love's sea of a sudden burst into its
viewing,
Leaped headlong in, with “ Find me now who may ! ”

As, the sun moving, clouds behind him run,
All hearts attend thee, O Tabriz's Sun !

* ¹ From the *Divani Shamsi Tabriz* translated by Mr. Reynold A. Nicholson.

II.

The man of God ¹ is drunken without wine,
The man of God is full without meat.
The man of God is distraught and bewildered,
The man of God has no food or sleep.
The man of God is a king 'neath dervish-cloak,
The man of God is a treasure in a ruin.²
The man of God is not of air and earth,
The man of God is not of fire and water.
The man of God is a boundless sea,
The man of God rains pearls without a cloud.
The man of God hath hundred moons and skies,
The man of God hath hundred suns.
The man of God is made wise by the Truth,
The man of God is not learned from book.
The man of God is beyond infidelity and religion,
To the man of God right and wrong are alike.
The man of God has ridden away from Not-being,
The man of God is gloriously attended.
The man of God is concealed, Shamsi Din ;
The man of God do thou seek and find !

¹ The perfect Sufi.

² Orientals fancy that treasures guarded by inviolable talismans lie buried in the ruins of Persepolis.

III.¹

Every moment the voice of Love is coming from left
and right.

We are bound for heaven : who has a mind to sight-
seeing ?

We have been in heaven, we have been friends of the
angels ;

Thither, sire, let us return, for that is our country.

We are even higher than heaven and more than the
angels ;

Why pass we not beyond these twain ? Our goal is
majesty supreme.

How different a source have the world of dust and the
pure substance !

Though we came down, let us haste back — what place
is this ?

Young fortune is our friend, yielding up soul our
business ;

The leader of our caravan is Mustafa, glory of the
world.

This gale's sweet scent is from the curl of his tresses,
This thought's radiance is from a cheek like "*by the
morning bright.*"

By his cheek the moon was split : she endured not
the sight of him ;

¹ This ghazel was sent by Sa'di to Shamsu'ddin Hindi, prince of Shiraz, who asked him "to select the best ode, with the most sublime thoughts, that he knew of as existing in Persian, and to send it to him for presentation to the great Khan of the Moguls." Redhouse's *Masnavi*.

Such fortune the moon found—she that is an humble
beggar.

Behold a continual “cleaving of the moon” in our
hearts,

For why should the vision of that vision transcend
thine eye?

Came the billow of “*Am I not?*” and wrecked the
body’s ship;

When the ship wrecks once more is the time of union’s
attainment.

Mankind, like waterfowl, are sprung from the sea—
the sea of soul;

Risen from that sea, why should the bird make here
his home?

Nay, we are pearls in that sea, therein we all abide;
Else, why does wave follow wave from the sea of soul?

’Tis the time of union’s attainment, ’tis the time of
eternity’s beauty,

’Tis the time of favor and largesse, ’tis the ocean of
perfect purity.

The billow of largesse hath appeared, the thunder of
the sea hath arrived,

The morn of blessedness hath dawned. Morn? No,
’tis the light of God.

Who is this pictured form, who is this monarch and
this prince?

Who is this aged wisdom? They are all veils.

The remedy against veils is ecstasies like these,

The fountain of these draughts is in your own head
and eyes.

In the head itself is nought, but ye have two heads ;
 This head of clay is from earth, and that pure head
 from heaven.

O the many pure heads scattered beneath the clay,
 That thou mayst know the head depends on that other
 head !

That original head hidden, and this derived head
 manifest,

Forasmuch as behind this world lies the infinite
 universe.

Tie up the skin, O cup-bearer, fetch wine from our
 jar :

The vessel of perceptions is straiter than a strait pass.
 From Tabrīz-ward shone the Sun of Truth, and I said
 to him :

“ Thy light is at once joined with all things and apart
 from all.”

IV.

What pearl art thou that none possesseth the price of
 thee ?

What does the world possess that is not thy gift ?
 Is there a worse punishment than his who lives away
 from thy face ?

Punish not thy servant though he is unworthy of thee.
 He that is fallen amid the surge of accidents
 Escapes not by swimming, since he is no friend of
 thine.

The world has no permanence, and if it have,

Deem it perishable, because it is unfamiliar with thy permanence.

How happy the king that is mated by thy rook !

How fair company hath he who lacks not thine !

I desire continually to fling heart and soul at thy feet ;
Dust on the head of the soul which is not the dust of thy feet !

Blessed to all birds is desire of thee ;

How unblest the bird that desires thee not !

I will not shun thy blow, for very crude

Is the heart ne'er burned in the fire of thy affliction.

To thy praise and praisers there is no end ;

What atom but is reeling with thy praise ?

Like that one of whom Nizami¹ tells in verse,

Tyrannize not, for I cannot endure thy tyranny.

O Shamsi Tabriz, beauty and glory of the horizons,

What king but is a beggar of thee with heart and soul ?

VI.

Poor copies out of heaven's original,

Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,

What care although your beauties break and fall,

When that which gave them life endures for aye ?

O never vex thine heart with idle woes :

All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,

All gilded landscapes and brave glistering shows,

Fade — perish, but it is not as we fear.

¹ Probably Laili.

While far away the living fountains ply,
 Each petty brook goes brimful to the main.
 Since brook nor fountain can forever die,
 Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain !

What is this fountain, wouldest thou rightly know ?
 The Soul whence issue all created things.
 Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,
 Till silenced are the everlasting springs.

Farewell to sorrow, and with quiet mind
 Drink long and deep : let others fondly deem
 The channel empty they perchance may find,
 Or fathom that unfathomable stream.

The moment thou to this low world wast given,
 A ladder stood whereby thou might'st aspire ;
 And first thy steps, which upward still have striven,
 From mineral mounted to the plant : then higher

To animal existence : next, the Man,
 With knowledge, reason, faith. O wondrous goal !
 This body, which a crumb of dust began —
 How fairly fashioned the consummate whole !

Yet stay not here thy journey : thou shalt grow
 An angel bright and home far off in heaven.
 Plod on, plunge last in the great Sea, that so
 Thy little drop make oceans seven times seven.

“The Son of God !” Nay, leave that word unsaid.
 Say, “God is one, the pure, the single Truth.”

What though thy frame be withered, old, and dead,
If the soul save her fresh immortal youth?

VI.

Lo, for I to myself am unknown, now in God's name
what must I do?

I adore not the Cross nor the Crescent, I am not a
Giaour nor a Jew.

East nor West land nor sea is my home, I have kin
nor with angel nor gnome,

I am wrought not of fire nor of foam, I am shaped
not of dust nor of dew.

I was born not in China afar, not in Saqsin and not in
Bulghar;

Not in India, where five rivers are, nor 'Iraq nor
Khorasan I grew.

Not in this world nor that world I dwell, not in Para-
dise, neither in Hell;

Not from Eden and Rizwan I fell, not from Adam my
lineage I drew.

In a place beyond uttermost Place, in a tract without
shadow of trace,

Soul and body transcending, I live in the soul of my
Loved One anew!

VII.

Up, O ye lovers, and away! 'Tis time to leave the
world for aye.

Hark, loud and clear from heaven the drum of part-
ing calls — let none delay!

The cameleer hath risen amain, made ready all the camel-train,
 And quittance now desires to gain : why sleep ye, travellers, I pray ?
 Behind us and before there swells the din of parting and of bells ;
 To shoreless Space each moment sails a disembodied spirit away.
 From yonder starry lights and through those curtain awnings darkly blue
 Mysterious figures float in view, all strange and secret things display.
 From this orb, wheeling round its pole, a wondrous slumber o'er thee stole :
 O weary life that weighest naught, O sleep that on my soul dost weigh !
 O heart, toward thy heart's love wend, and O friend, fly toward the Friend,
 Be wakeful, watchman, to the end : drowse seemingly no watchman may.

VIII.

Why wilt thou dwell in mouldy cell, a captive, O my heart ?
 Speed, speed the flight ! a nursling bright of yonder world thou art.
 He bids thee rest upon his breast, he flings the veil away :
 Thy home wherefore make evermore this mansion of decay ?

O contemplate thy true estate, enlarge thyself, and
rove

From this dark world, thy prison, whirled to that
celestial grove.

O honored guest in Love's high feast, O bird of the
angel sphere,

'Tis cause to weep, if thou wilt keep thy habitation
here.

A voice at morn to thee is borne — God whispers to
the soul —

“ If on the way the dust thou lay, thou soon wilt gain
the goal.”

That road be thine toward the Shrine ! and lo, in bush
and brier,

The many slain by love and pain in flower of young
desire,

Who on the track fell wounded back and saw not, ere
the end,

A ray of bliss, a touch, a kiss, a token of the Friend !

IX.

When my bier moveth on the day of death,

Think not my heart is in this world.

Do not weep for me and cry, “ Woe, woe ! ”

Thou wilt fall in the devil's snare : that is woe.

When thou seest my hearse, cry not, “ Parted,
parted ! ”

Union and meeting are mine in that hour.

If thou commit me to the grave, say not, “ Farewell,
farewell ! ”

For the grave is a curtain hiding the communion of Paradise.

After beholding descent, consider resurrection ;
 Why should setting be injurious to the sun and moon ?
 To thee it seems a setting, but 'tis a rising ;
 Though the vault seems a prison, 'tis the release of the soul.

What seed went down into the earth but it grew ?
 Why this doubt of thine as regards the seed of man ?
 What bucket was lowered but it came out brimful ?
 Why should the Joseph of the spirit complain of the well ?

Shut thy mouth on this side and open it beyond,
 For in placeless air will be thy triumphal song.

x.

From the bosom of Self I catch continually a scent of the Beloved :

How should I not, every night, take Self to my bosom ?
 Yestereve I was in Love's garden : this desire came into my head :

His sun peeped forth from mine eye : the river (of tears) began to flow.

Each laughing rose that springs from his laughing lip
 Had escaped the thorn of being, had avoided Dhu 'lfiqar.¹

¹ Famous sword given by Mohammed to Ali, used here as death, corruption.

Every tree and blade of grass was dancing in the meadow,

But in the view of the vulgar they were bound and at rest.

Suddenly on one side our Cypress appeared,
So that the garden became senseless and the plane clapped its hands.

A face like fire, wine like fire, Love afire — all three delectable ;

The soul, by reason of the mingled fires, was wailing,
“ Where shall I flee ? ”

In the world of Divine Unity is no room for Number,
But Number necessarily exists in the world of Five and Four.

You may count a hundred thousand sweet apples in your hand :

If you wish to make One, crush them all together.

Behold, without regarding the letters, what is this language in the heart ;

Pureness of color is a quality derived from the Source of Action.

Shamsi Tabriz is seated in royal state, and before him
My rhymes are ranked like willing servants.

XI.

Thee I choose, of all the world, alone ;

Wilt thou suffer me to sit in grief ?

My heart is as a pen in thy hand,

Thou art the cause if I am glad or melancholy.

Save what thou willest, what will have I?
 Save what thou showest, what do I see?
 Thou mak'st grow out of me now a thorn and now a rose ;
 Now I smell roses and now pull thorns.
 If thou keep'st me that, that I am ;
 If thou would'st have me this, I am this.
 In the vessel where thou givest color to the soul
 Who am I, what is my love and hate?

XII.

I am a painter, a maker of pictures ; every moment I
 shape a beauteous form,
 And then in thy presence I melt them all away.
 I call up a hundred phantoms and indue them with a
 spirit ;
 When I behold thy phantom, I cast them in the fire.
 Art thou the Vintner's cup-bearer or the enemy of him
 who is sober,
 Or is it thou who mak'st a ruin of every house I build ?
 In thee the soul is dissolved, with thee it is mingled ;
 Lo ! I will cherish the soul, because it has a perfume
 of thee.
 Every drop of blood which proceeds from me is saying
 to thy dust :
 "I am one color with thy love, I am the partner of thy
 affection."
 In the house of water and clay this heart is desolate
 without thee ;
 O Beloved, enter the house, or I will leave it.

XIII.

This is Love : to fly heavenward.
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils.
The first moment, to renounce life ;
The last step, to fare without feet.
To regard this world as invisible,
Not to see what appears to one's self.
“O heart,” I said, “may it bless thee
To have entered the circle of lovers,
To look beyond the range of the eye,
To penetrate the windings of the bosom !
Whence did this breath come to thee, O my soul,
Whence this throbbing, O my heart ?
O bird, speak the language of birds :
I can understand thy hidden meaning.”
The soul answered : “ I was in the (divine) Factory
While the house of water and clay was a-baking.
I was a flying away from the (material) workshop
While the workshop was being created.
When I could resist no more, they dragged me
To mould me into shape like a ball.”

XIV.

Happy the moment when we are seated in the palace,
thou and I,
With two forms and with two figures but with one
soul, thou and I.

The colors of the grove and the voice of the birds
will bestow immortality

At the time when we come into the garden, thou and
I.

The stars of heaven will come to gaze upon us ;
We shall show them the moon itself, thou and I.

Thou and I, individuals no more, shall be mingled in
ecstasy,

Joyful, and secure from foolish babble, thou and I.

All the bright-plumed birds of heaven will devour their
hearts with envy

In the place where we shall laugh in such a fashion,
thou and I.

This is the greatest wonder, that thou and I, sitting
here in the same nook,

Are at this moment both in 'Iraq and Khorasan, thou
and I.

xv.

O my soul, who is this, stationed in the house of the
heart ?

Who may occupy the royal seat save the King and the
Prince ?

He beckoned with his hand : " Say, what do you desire
of me ? "

What does a drunken man desire except sweetmeats
and a cup of wine ?

Sweetmeats derived from the soul, a cup of the Absolu-
tive Light,

An eternal banquet laid in the privacy of “*He is the Truth.*”

How many deceivers are there at the wine-drinkers’ feast !

Take heed lest thou fall, O easy simple man!

Beware ! do not keep, in a circle of reprobates,

Thine eye shut like a bud, thy mouth open like the rose.

The world resembles a mirror : thy Love is the perfect image ;

O people, who has ever seen a part greater than the whole ?

Go on foot, like the grass, because in this garden

The Beloved, like the rose, is riding, all the rest are on foot.

He is both the sword and the swordsman, both the slain and the slayer,

He is at once all Reason and brings Reason to nought.

That King is Salahu’ddin¹— may he endure forever,
May his bounteous hand perpetually be a necklace on my neck !

XVI.

At last thou hast departed and gone to the Unseen ;
’Tis marvellous by what way thou wentest from the world.

Thou didst strongly shake thy wings and feathers, and having broken thy cage

¹ Salahu’ddin Zarkub (Goldsmith). See Redhouse’s *Masnavi*, p. 110.

Didst take to the air and journey toward the world of soul.

Thou wert a favorite falcon, kept in captivity by an old woman :

When thou heard'st the falcon-drum thou didst fly away into the Void.

Thou wert a love-lorn nightingale among owls :

The scent of the rose-garden reached thee, and thou didst go to the rose-garden.

Thou didst suffer sore headache from this bitter ferment ;

At last thou wentest to the tavern of Eternity.

Straight as an arrow thou didst make for the mark of bliss ;

Thou didst speed like an arrow to that mark from this bow.

The world gave thee false clews, like a ghoul :

Thou took'st no heed of the clew, but wentest to that which is without a clew.

Since thou art now the sun, why dost thou wear a tiara, Why seek a girdle, since thou art gone from the middle ?

I have heard that thou art gazing with distorted eyes upon thy soul :

Why dost thou gaze on thy soul, since thou art gone to the soul of Soul ?

O heart, what a wondrous bird art thou, that in chase of divine rewards

Thou didst fly with two wings to the spear point, like a shield !

The rose flees from autumn — O what a fearless rose
art thou
Who didst go loitering along in the presence of the
autumn wind !
Falling like rain from heaven upon the roof of the ter-
restrial world
Thou didst run in every direction till thou didst escape
by the conduit.
Be silent and free from the pain of speech : do not
slumber,
Since thou hast taken refuge with so loving a Friend.

ESSEDI.

THIS poet is said to have had the distinction of being Firdausi's teacher. He was one of the bright particular stars at the court of the great Mahmud of Ghazni, but later his famous pupil completely outshone him.

The Sultan, it seems, had frequently urged Essedi to write the *Shah-Nameh*, but the poet always refused, pleading his old age as an excuse. However, in spite of his age he outlived Firdausi, and wrote, for his dying pupil, the last four thousand couplets of the *Shah-Nameh*.

The story goes that when Firdausi was on his death-bed at Tus, he sent for his old master and told him that he feared that he would never live to complete the *Shah-Nameh*. And if he did not finish it who would? Essedi answered, "My son, be not grieved; if I live, I will finish it." Firdausi rejoined, "You are old, and can scarcely do so." But Essedi in two days' time composed the four thousand couplets, and Firdausi saw them before he died.

That Essedi did help Firdausi there can be no doubt, but exactly to what extent has never been satisfactorily proved.

His most celebrated poem is the dispute between Day and Night.

DAY AND NIGHT.¹

DAY and Night, who each can yield
Joy and solace to the earth,
Thus contended for the field,

¹ Taken from Miss Costello's *Rose Garden of Persia*.

Claiming both the highest birth —
Night spoke frowningly : “ ’Twas I
Who from all eternity
Ruled the chaos of the world,
When in dim confusion hurled.
The fervent prayer is heard at night ;
Devotion flies day’s glaring light.
'Twas night, the Mount when Moses left ;
At night was Lot avenged by fire :
At night the moon our prophet cleft,
And saw Heaven’s might revealed entire.
The lovely moon for thirty days
Spreads radiant glory from afar :
Her charms forever night displays,
Crowned, like a queen, with many a star :
Her seal-bearer is Heav’n, a band
Of planets wait on her command.
Day can but paint the skies with blue,
Night’s starry hosts amaze the view.
Man measures time but by the moon ;
Night shrouds what day reveals too soon.
Day is with toil and care oppressed,
Night comes, and, with her, gentle rest.
Day, busy still, no praise can bring,
All night the saints their anthems sing ;
Her shade is cast by Gabriel’s wing !
The moon is pure, the sun’s broad face
Dark and unsightly spots deface :
The sun shines on with changeless glare,
The moon is ever new and fair.”

Day rose, and smiled in high disdain : —
“ Cease all this boasting, void and vain ;
The Lord of Heaven, and earth, and thee
 Gave me a place more proud than thine,
And men with joy my rising see,
 And hail the beams that round me shine.
The holy pilgrim takes by day
To many a sacred shrine his way ;
By day the pious fast and pray ;
And solemn feasts are held by day.
On the *Last Day* the world’s career is run,
As on the *First* its being was begun.
Thou, Night, art friendly, it may be,
For lovers fly for help to thee.
When do the sick thy healing see ?
Thieves, by thy aid, may scathless prowl ;
Sacred to thee the bat and owl ;
And, led by thee, pale spectres grimly howl !
I sprang from Heaven, from dust thou art,
 Light crowns my head with many a gem ;
The collier’s cap is on thy brow —
 For thee a fitting diadem.
My presence fills the world with joy ;
Thou com’st all comfort to annoy.
I am a Moslem — white my vest :
Thou a vile thief, in sable drest.
Out negro-face ! — dar’st thou compare
Thy cheeks with mine, so purely fair ?
Those ‘ hosts of stars,’ thy boast and pride,
How do they rush their sparks to hide,

How to their native darkness run,
When, in his glory, comes the sun !
True, death was *first*; but, tell me, who
Thinks life least worthy of the two ?
'Tis by the moon the Arab counts ;
 The lordly Persian tells his year
By the bright sun, that proudly mounts
 The yielding heavens, so wide and clear.
The sun is ruddy, strong, and hale ;
The moon is sickly, wan, and pale.
Methinks 'twas ne'er in story told
That silver had the worth of gold !
The moon, a slave, is bowed and bent,
She knows her light is only lent ;
She hurries on, the way to clear
 Till the great Shah himself appear.
What canst thou, idle boaster, say
To prove the night excels the day ?
If stubborn still, let Him decide
With whom all truth and law abide ;
Let Nasur Ahmed, wise as great,
Pronounce, and give to each his state."

SA'DI.

SHAIKH SA'DI, the nightingale of Shiraz, as Jami poetically calls this gifted poet, was born at Shiraz, the capital of Persia, near the end of the twelfth century. All biographers agree that he lived to be over a hundred years old, Daulat Shah even crediting him with a hundred and twenty years. Shaikh Muslih-ud-Din, for that is Sa'di's real name, was patronized by Atabak Sad-ibn-Zangi, the Viceroy of Persia, hence his *takhallus*, Sa'di; to which was added as a great honor the title of Shaikh. At this time the college at Baghdad was the great educational centre of the East, and there Sa'di was educated. He was of a religious temperament and is said to have made fourteen pilgrimages to Mecca. These journeys took place during the second period of his life, for most writers divide Sa'di's life into three parts: the first devoted to study, the second to travel, and the third to seclusion, for at Shiraz he built himself a hermitage and there, when over sixty, he devoted himself to his great literary career. Emerson, commenting on his varied experience, says: "By turns, a student, a water-carrier, a traveller, a soldier fighting against the Christians in the Crusades, a prisoner employed to dig trenches before Tripoli, and an honored poet in his protracted old age at home,—his varied and severe experience took away all provincial tone, and gave him a facility of speaking to all conditions. But the commanding reason of his wider popularity is his deeper sense, which, in his treatment, expands the local forms and tints to a cosmopolitan breadth. Through his Persian dialect he speaks to all

nations, and, like Homer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Montaigne, is perpetually modern." Indeed, "He has furnished the originals of a multitude of tales and proverbs which are current in our mouths, and attributed by us to recent writers ; as, for example, the story of 'Abraham and the Fire-worshippers,' once claimed for Doctor Franklin, and afterward traced to Jeremy Taylor, who probably found it in Olearius."

His works number twenty-four.¹ Among those best known are the *Gulistan*, or Rose Garden, and the *Bustan*, or the Garden of Perfume. The *Gulistan* is a collection of short pithy stories, based on Sa'di's own varied experiences, and read, it is said, from the middle of China to the extreme corners of Africa, forming as it does the basis of instruction in Mohammedan schools. In his Preface to the *Gulistan*, Sa'di tells how he came to write the book. ". . . It happened once, that I was benighted in a garden, in company with one of my friends. The spot was delightful, the trees intertwined ; you would have said that the earth was bedecked with glass spangles, and that the knot of the Pleiades was suspended from the branch of the vine. A garden with a running stream, and trees from whence birds were warbling melodious strains : that filled with tulips of various hues ; these loaded with fruits of several kinds. Under the shade of its trees the zephyr had spread the variegated carpet. In the morning, when the desire to return home overcame our inclination for remaining, I saw in his lap a collection of roses, odoriferous herbs, and hyacinths, which he had intended to carry to town. I said, ' You are not ignorant of the fact that the flower of the garden soon fadeth, and that the enjoyment of the rosebush is but of short continuance ; and the sages have declared that the heart ought not to be set upon anything that is transitory.' He asked, ' What course is then to be pursued ? ' I replied : ' I am able to form a

¹ Sir Gore Ouseley in his *Biographical Notices of Persian Poets*.

book of roses, which will delight the beholders, and gratify those who are present ; whose leaves the tyrannic arm of the autumnal blasts can never affect, nor injure the blossoms of its spring. What benefit will you derive from a basket of flowers ? Carry a leaf from my garden : a rose may continue in bloom for five or six days ; but this rose garden will flourish forever.' As soon as I had uttered these words, he flung the flowers from his lap, and, laying hold of the skirt of my garment, exclaimed, 'When the beneficent promise, they faithfully discharge their engagements.' In the course of a few days, two chapters (one on the comforts of society, and the other containing rules for conversation) were written out in my note-book, in a style that may be useful to orators, and improve the skill of letter-writers. In short, whilst the rose was yet in bloom, the book entitled the Rose Garden was finished."¹

The *Bustan*, Sa'di's other famous work, is also used as a text-book in military and civil examinations, and consists of ten chapters of didactic verse. The remarkable fact about his writings is the extremely simple way in which they are expressed. He took his lessons from the world ; indeed he went so far in his zeal to experience all things personally that he at one time assumed the religion of the worshippers of Vishnu, a sect for which he really had no sympathy. The story of this assumed conversion is told in his *Bustan*.²

Sa'di became a confirmed woman-hater, owing probably to his two unfortunate marriages. He himself has given us a graphic account of his first marriage in the *Gulistan*³ as well as a most lovely lament on the death of his only son.⁴ His daughter lived to marry the famous Hafiz.

Taking his writings as a whole, one may say that Sa'di's creed was cheerfulness and contentment. In fact he himself tells us that he was never discontented but once in his

¹ Gladwin's translation.

² See page 332.

³ See page 280.

⁴ See page 325.

life, when he grumbled because he had no shoes. But shortly after he met a man who had no feet. His grumbling ceased.

This dervish wit and linguist the Mohammedans worshipped as a saint, even attributing miracles to him. His body now lies entombed in the valley of Shiraz, and is daily visited by devout pilgrims who say of him, in true Oriental fashion, that he “perforated with the diamond of his soul the precious stones of his experiences, and, after gathering them on the string of eloquence, hung them for a talisman round the neck of posterity.”

GULISTAN ; OR, ROSE GARDEN.¹

PREFACE.

The Glorious Qualities of the Monarch of the True Faith (May God make clear its Demonstration)
Abu-Bakr-bin-Sad-bin-Zangi.²

The fair report of Sa'di, which is celebrated by the general voice ; and the fame of his sayings, which has travelled the whole surface of the earth ; and the loved reed,³ which imparts his discourse, and which they devour like honey ; and the manner in which men carry off the scraps of his writing, as though they were

¹ Selections from Edward B. Eastwick's translation.

² *Bin, ben, or ibn* signifies “son of.”

³ The Oriental *kalam* (calamus) or pen is, as every one knows, a reed. This leads to various poetical fantasies. Thus Maulavi Rumi,

“ Hear the reed's complaining wail !
 Hear it tell its mournful tale !
 Torn from the spot it loved so well,
 Its grief, its sighs, our tears compel.”

gold leaf— are not to be ascribed to the perfection of his own excellence or eloquence, but [to this, that] the Lord of the Earth, the Axis of the Revolution of Time, the Successor of Suliman, the Defender of the People of the True Faith, the Puissant King of Kings, the Great Atabak¹ Muzaffaru'd-din Abu-Bakr-bin-Sad-bin-Zangi, God's shadow on earth (*O God! approve him and his desires!*) has regarded him with extreme condescension and bestowed on him lavish commendation, and evinced a sincere regard for him. Of a verity, from attachment to him, all people, both high and low, have become favorably inclined toward me, since men adopt the sentiments of their kings.²

Quatrain.

Since to my lowness thou didst with favor turn,
My track is clearer than the sun's bright beam.
Though in thy servant all might every fault discern;
When kings approve, e'en vices virtues seem.

Verse.

"Twas in the bath, a piece of perfumed clay
Came from my loved one's hands to mine, one day.
"Art thou then musk or ambergris?" I said;

¹ *Atabak* is a Turkish word signifying "father of the prince." It was originally applied to a prime minister or great noble of state. It afterward became the title of a dynasty of Persian kings, originally Turkomans, who reigned from 1148 to 1264 A.D. To the sixth of these, Sad-bin-Zangi, Sa'di dedicates his *Gulistan*. He reigned thirty-five years, and died A.D. 1259.

² A quotation from the Koran.

"That by thy scent my soul is ravished ?"
 "Not so," it answered, "worthless earth was I,
 But long I kept the rose's company ;
 Thus near, its perfect fragrance to me came, -
 Else I'm but earth, the worthless and the same."¹

STORY.

A king was seated in a vessel with a Persian slave. The slave had never before beheld the sea, nor experienced the inconvenience of a ship. He began to weep and bemoan himself, and a tremor pervaded his frame. In spite of their endeavors to soothe him, he would not be quieted. The comfort of the king was disturbed by him ; but they could not devise a remedy. In the ship there was a philosopher, who said, "If you command, I will silence him." The king answered, "It would be the greatest favor." The philosopher directed them to cast the slave into the sea. He underwent several submersions, and they then took him by the hair and dragged him toward the ship. He clung to the rudder of the vessel with both hands, and they then pulled him on board again. When he had come on board, he seated himself in a corner and kept quiet. The king approved, and asked, "What was the secret of this expedient ?" The philosopher replied, "At first he had not tasted the agony of drown-

¹ By this simile, which in the original is of exquisite beauty, Sa'di would express his own unworthiness, and the estimation imparted to him by the king's favor.

ing, and knew not the value of the safety of a vessel. In the same manner a person who is overtaken by calamity learns to value a state of freedom from ill."

Sstanza.

Sated, thou wilt my barley-loaf repel.
She whom I love ill-favored seems to thee.
To Eden's Houris Iraf would seem hell :
Hell's inmates ask — they'll call it heavenly.

Couplet.

Wide is the space 'twixt him who clasps his love,
And him whose eyes watch for the door to move.¹

STORY.

In a certain year I was engaged in devotion at the tomb of the Prophet Yahiya,² in the principal mosque of Damascus. It happened that one of the Arabian princes, who was notorious for his injustice, came as a pilgrim thither, performed his prayers, and asked [of God] what he stood in need of.

Couplet.

The poor, the rich, alike must here adore :
The wealthier they, their need is here the more.

¹ In expectation of seeing his loved one come in.

² St. John the Baptist, whose remains were said to be interred in a church at Damascus. After the conquest of Syria by the Mussulman, this church was converted into a mosque, and called the mosque of the tribe of Ummiyah.

He then turned toward me and said, “On account of the generous character of dervishes, and the sincerity of their dealings, I ask you to give me the aid of your spirit, for I stand in dread of a powerful enemy.” I replied, “Show mercy to thy weak subjects, that thou mayst not experience annoyance from a puissant foe.”

Verse.

With the strong arm and giant grasp 'tis wrong
To crush the feeble, unresisting throng.
Who pities not the fallen, let him fear,
Lest, if he fall, no friendly hand be near.
Who sows ill actions and of blessing dreams,
Fosters vain fantasies and idly schemes.
Unstop thy ears, thy people's wants relieve,
If not, a day¹ shall come when all their rights receive.

Distichs.

All Adam's race are members of one frame ;
Since all, at first, from the same essence came.
When by hard fortune one limb is oppressed,
The other members lose their wonted rest :
If thou feel'st not for others' misery,
A son of Adam is no name for thee.

STORY.

One of my companions came to me with complaints of his ill-fortune, saying, “I have but little means of

¹ That is, the day of resurrection.

subsistence, and a large family, and I cannot support the burden of poverty ; it has frequently entered my head that I would go to another country, in order that, live how I may, no one may know of my welfare or the reverse.

Couplet.

Full many a starving wight has slept¹ unknown ;
Full many a spirit fled that none bemoan.

Again, I am in dread of the rejoicing of my enemies, lest they should laugh scoffingly at mè behind my back, and impute my exertions in behalf of my family to a want of humanity, and say,

Stanza.

See now, that wretch devoid of shame ! for him
Fair fortune's face will smile not, nor has smiled ;
Himself he pampers in each selfish whim,
And leaves his hardships to his wife and child.

“ And I know something, as you are aware, of the science of accounts ; if by your interest a means [of subsistence] could be afforded me, which might put me at ease, I should not be able to express my gratitude sufficiently to the end of my life.” I replied, “ O my friend ! the king's service has two sides to it, — hope of a livelihood, and terror for one's life ; and it is contrary to the opinion of the wise, through such a hope to expose oneself to such a fear.

¹ Here used for “ died.”

Stanza.

None in the poor man's hut demand
 Tax on his garden or his land.
 Be thou content with toil and woe,
 Or with thy entrails feed the crow.”

He replied, “These words that thou hast spoken do not apply to my case, nor hast thou returned an answer to my question. Hast thou not heard what they have said, ‘that the hand of every one who chooses to act dishonestly trembles in rendering the account’?”

Couplet.

God favors those who follow the right way,
 From a straight road I ne'er saw mortal stray.

“And the sages have said, ‘Four kinds of persons are in deadly fear of four others : the brigand of the Sultan, and the thief of the watchman, and the adulterer of the informer, and the harlot of the superintendent of police ;’ and what fear have those of the settling, whose accounts are clear ?”

Stanza.

Wouldst thou confine thy rival’s power to harm
 Thee at discharge? then while thy trust remains,
 Be not too free ; none shall thee then alarm.
 ’Tis the soiled raiment which, to cleanse from stains,
 Is struck on stones and asks the washer’s pains.

I answered, “Applicable to thy case is the story of that fox which people saw running away in violent trepidation.¹ Some one said to him, ‘What calamity has happened to cause thee so much alarm?’ He replied, ‘I have heard they are going to impress the camel.’ They rejoined, ‘O Shatter-brain! what connection has a camel with thee, and what resemblance hast thou to it?’ He answered, ‘Peace! for if the envious should, to serve their own ends, say, “This is a camel,” and I should be taken, who would care about my release so as to inquire into my condition? and before the antidote is brought from Irak, the person who is bitten by the snake may be dead.’² And in the same way thou possessest merit, and good faith, and piety, and uprightness; but the envious are in ambush, and the accusers are lurking in corners. If they should misrepresent thy fair qualities, and thou shouldst incur the king’s displeasure and fall into disgrace, who would have power, in that situation of affairs, to speak for thee? I look upon it as thy best course to secure the kingdom of contentment, and to abandon the idea of preferment, since the wise have said,

Couplet.

‘Upon the sea ’tis true is boundless gain :
Wouldst thou be safe, upon the shore remain.’”

¹ Literally, “falling and rising.”

² The *tiryak* is an antidote against poison. Some think it is treacle; and others the bezoar-stone. This sentence is a proverb in common use.

When my friend heard these words he was displeased, and his countenance was overcast, and he began to utter words which bore marks of his vexation, saying, “What judgment, and profit, and understanding, and knowledge is this ? and the saying of the sages has turned out correct, in that they have said, ‘Those are useful friends who continue so when we are in prison ; for at our table all our enemies appear friends.’

Stanza.

Think not thy friend one who in fortune’s hour
 Boasts of his friendship and fraternity.
 Him I call friend who sums up all his power
 To aid thee in distress and misery.”

I saw that he was troubled, and that my advice was taken in bad part. I went to the president of finance, and, in accordance with our former intimacy, I told him the case ; in consequence of which he appointed my friend to some trifling office. Some time passed away ; they saw the amenity of his disposition, and approved his excellent judgment. His affairs prospered, and he was appointed to a superior post ; and in the same manner the star of his prosperity continued to ascend until he reached the summit of his desires, and became a confidential servant of his Majesty the Sultan, *and the pointed-at by men’s fingers, and one in whom the ministers of State placed their confidence.* I rejoiced at his secure position and said,

Couplet.

“Have no doubts because of trouble nor be thou discomfited ;
For the water of life’s fountain¹ springeth from a gloomy bed.

Couplet.

“Ah! ye brothers of misfortune! be not ye with grief oppressed,
Many are the secret mercies which with the All-bounteous rest.

Couplet.

“Sit not sad because that Time a fitful aspect weareth ;
Patience is most bitter, yet most sweet the fruit it beareth.”

During this interval I happened to accompany a number of my friends on a journey to Hijaz.² When I returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca he came out two stages to meet me. I saw that his outward appearance was one of distress, and that he wore the garb of a dervish. I said, “What is thy condition ?” He replied, “Just as thou said’st : a party became envious of me, and accused me of disloyal conduct ; and the

¹ Mohammedans believe in a fountain of life, to taste one drop of which bestows immortality. They say that *Khizr*, or Elias, who, they suppose, was the general of the first Alexander, discovered this fountain, and drank of it, and hence he can never die.

² Arabia Petræa.

king did not deign to inquire minutely into the explanation of the circumstances ; and my former companions, and even my sincere friends, forbore to utter the truth, and forgot their long intimacy.

Stanza.

When one has fallen from high heaven's decree,
The banded world will trample on his head ;
Then fawn and fold their hands respectfully,
When they behold his steps by fortune led.

In short, I was subjected to all kinds of tortures till within this week that the good tidings of the safety of the pilgrims ¹ arrived, when they granted me release from grievous durance, with the confiscation of my hereditary estate.” I said : “At that time thou wouldest not receive my suggestion, that the service of the king is like a sea-voyage, at once profitable and fraught with peril ; where thou either wilt acquire a treasure, or perish amid the billows.

Couplet.

Or with both hands the merchant shall one day embrace
the gold ;
Or by the waves his lifeless form shall on the strand be
rolled.”

I did not think it right to lacerate his mental wounds further, or to sprinkle them with salt. I confined myself to these two couplets and said,

¹ The pilgrims to Mecca.

Stanza.

“ Knewest thou not that thou wouldest see the chains
upon thy feet,
When a deaf ear thou turnedst on the counsels of the
wise ?
If the torture of the sting thou canst not with courage
meet,
Place not thy finger in the hole where the sullen
scorpion lies.”

STORY.

A person had reached perfection in the art of wrestling. He knew three hundred and sixty precious sleights in this art, and every day he wrestled with a different device. However, his heart was inclined toward the beauty of one of his pupils. He taught him three hundred and fifty-nine throws, all he knew save one, the teaching of which he deferred. The youth was perfect in skill and strength, and no one could withstand him, till he at length boasted before the Sultan that he allowed the superiority of his master over him only out of respect to his years, and what was due to him as an instructor, and that but for that he was not inferior in strength, and on a par with him in skill. The king was displeased at his breach of respect, and he commanded them to wrestle. A vast arena was selected. The great nobles and ministers of the king attended. The youth entered, like a furious elephant,

with a shock that had his adversary been a mountain of iron would have upturned it from its base. The master perceived that the young man was his superior in strength. He fastened on him with that curious grip which he had kept concealed from him. The youth knew not how to foil it. The preceptor lifted him with both hands from the ground, and raised him above his head, and dashed him on the ground. A shout of applause arose from the multitude. The king commanded them to bestow a robe of honor and reward on the master, and heaped reproaches on the youth, saying, "Thou hast presumed to encounter him who educated thee, and thou hast failed." He replied, "Sire ! my master overcame me, not by strength or power, but a small point was left in the art of wrestling which he withheld from me ; and by this trifling he has to-day gotten the victory over me." The preceptor said, "I reserved it for such a day as this ; for the sages have said, 'Give not thy friend so much power that if one day he should become a foe, thou mayst not be able to resist him.' Hast thou not heard what once was said by one who had suffered wrong from a pupil of his own ?

Stanza.

' On earth there is no gratitude, I trow ;
Or none, perhaps, to use it now pretend.
None learn of me the science of the bow,
Who make me not their target in the end.' "

STORY.

A king gave an order to put an innocent person to death. He said, "O king ! for the anger which thou feelest against me, seek not thine own injury !" The king asked, " How so ? " He replied, " I shall suffer this pang but for a moment, and the guilt of it will attach to thee forever."

Quatrain.

Circling on, life's years have fled, as flies the breeze of morn ;

Sadness and mirth, and foul and fair, for aye have passed away.

Dream'st thou, tyrant ! thou hast wreaked on me thy rage and scorn ?

The burthen from my neck has passed, on thine must ever stay.

The king laughed and said, " In thy life thou never said'st a truer word than this." He then commanded the usual allowance for descendants of the Prophet to be got ready for him.

STORY.

Abdu'l-Kadir Gilani¹ laid his face on the pebbles in the sanctuary of the Kaba, and said, " O Lord ! pardon me ; but if I am deserving of punishment, raise

¹ This saintly personage was a celebrated Sufi of Baghdad, under whom Sa'di embraced the doctrine of the Mystics.

me up at the resurrection blind, that I may not be ashamed in the sight of the righteous."

Stanza.

Humbly in dust I bow each day
 My face, with wakening memory,
 O Thou ! whom I forget not, say,
 Dost thou bethink Thee e'er of me ?

STORY.

A thief entered the house of a recluse. However much he searched, he found nothing. He turned back sadly and in despair, and was observed by the holy man, who cast the blanket on which he slept in the way of the thief, that he might not be disappointed.

Stanza.

The men of God's true faith, I've heard,
 Grieve not the hearts e'en of their foes.
 When will this station be conferred
 On thee who dost thy friends oppose ?

The friendship of the pure-minded, whether in presence or absence, is not such that they will find fault with thee behind thy back, and die for thee in thy presence.

Couplet.

Before thee like the lamb they gentle are :
 Absent, than savage wolves more ruthless far.

Couplet.

They who the faults of others bring to you,
Be sure they'll bear to others your faults too.

STORY.

Certain travellers had agreed to journey together, and to share their pains and pleasures. I wished to join them. They withheld their consent. I said, "It is inconsistent with the benevolent habits of the eminent to avert the countenance from the society of the lowly, and to decline to be of service to them; and I feel in myself such power of exertion and energy that in the service of men I should be an active friend, not a weight on their minds.

Couplet.

*What though I'm borne¹ not in the camel throng,
Yet will I strive to bear your loads along."*

One of them said, "Let not thy heart be grieved at the answer thou hast received, for within the last few days a thief came in the guise of a dervish, and linked himself in the chain of our society."

Couplet.

What know men of the wearer, though they know the dress full well?
The letter-writer only can the letter's purport tell.

¹ There is an attempt here at a pun.

Inasmuch as the state of dervishes is one of security, they had no suspicion of his meddling propensities, and admitted him into companionship.

Distichs.

Rags are the external sign of holiness ;
 Sufficient — for men judge by outward dress.
 Strive to do well, and what thou pleasest, wear ;
 Thy head a crown, thine arm a flag may bear.
 Virtue lies not in sackcloth coarse and sad ;
 Be purely pious, and in satin clad :
 True holiness consists in quitting vice,
 The world and lust, — not dress ; — let this suffice.
 Let valiant men their breasts with iron plate :
 Weapons of war ill suit the effeminate.

“ In short, one day, we had journeyed till dusk, and slept for the night under a castle’s walls. The graceless thief took up the water-pot of one of his comrades, saying that he was going for a necessary purpose, and went, in truth, to plunder.

Couplet.

He’d fain with tattered garment for a dervish pass,
 And makes the Kaba’s¹ pall the housings of an ass.

¹ First the Khalifahs, then the Sultans of Egypt, and lastly those of Constantinople, have been in the habit of sending annually to Mecca a rich covering of brocade for the temple there, called the Kaba.

As soon as he had got out of sight of the dervishes he scaled a bastion, and stole a casket. Before the day dawned, that dark-hearted one had got to a considerable distance, and his innocent companions were still asleep. In the morning they carried them all to the fortress and imprisoned them. From that day we have abjured society, and kept to the path of retirement, for, *in solitude there is safety.*"

Stanza.

When but one member of a tribe has done
A foolish act, all bear alike disgrace,
Seest thou how in the mead one ox alone
Will lead astray the whole herd of a place?

I said, "I thank God (may He be honored and glorified !) that I have not remained excluded from the beneficial influences of the dervishes, although I have been deprived of their society, and I have derived profit from this story, and this advice will be useful to such as I am through the whole of life."

Distichs.

Be there but one rough person in their train,
For his misdeeds the wise will suffer pain.
Should you a cistern with rose-water fill,
A dog dropped in it would defile it still.

STORY.

A religious recluse became the guest of a king. When they sate down to their meals, he ate less than

his wont ; and when they rose up to pray, he prayed longer than he was accustomed to, that they might have a greater opinion of his piety.

Couplet.

O Arab ! much I fear thou at Mecca's shrine wilt never be,

For the road that thou art going is the road to Tartary.

When he returned to his own abode he ordered the cloth to be laid that they might eat. He had a son possessed of a ready wit, who said, “O my father ! didst thou eat nothing at the entertainment of the Sultan?” He replied, “I ate nothing in their sight to serve a purpose.” The son rejoined, “Repeat thy prayers again, and make up for their omission, since thou hast done nothing that can serve any purpose.”

Stanza.

Thy merits in thy palm thou dost display ;

Thy faults beneath thy arm from sight withhold.

What wilt thou purchase, vain one ! in that day,

The day of anguish, with thy feigned gold ?¹

STORY.

I remember that, in the time of my childhood, I was devout, and in the habit of keeping vigils, and eager to practise mortification and austerities. One night I

¹ Literally, “Base silver or coin.”

sat up in attendance on my father, and did not close my eyes the whole night, and held the precious Koran in my lap while the people around me slept. I said to my father, “Not one of these lifts up his head to perform a prayer.¹ They are so profoundly asleep that you would say they were dead.” He replied, “Life of thy father! it were better if thou, too, wert asleep; rather than thou shouldst be backbiting people.”

Stanza.

Naught but themselves can vain pretenders mark,
For conceit’s curtain intercepts their view.
Did God illume that which in them is dark,
Naught than themselves would wear a darker hue.

STORY.

In a certain assembly they were extolling a person of eminence, and going to an extreme in praising his excellent qualities. He raised his head, and said, “I am that which I know myself to be.”

Couplet.

*Thou who wouldest sum my virtues up, enough thou'll
find
In outward semblance ; to my secret failings blind.*

¹ Literally, “A double prayer,” “binæ precatio[n]es,” as M. Semelet remarks, like “deux Pater et deux Avé.”

Stanza.

My person, in men's eyes, is fair to view ;
 But, for my inward faults, shame bows my head.
 The peacock, lauded for his brilliant hue,
 Is by his ugly feet discomfited.

STORY.

They asked Lukman, “ Of whom didst thou learn manners ? ” He replied, “ From the unmannerly. Whatever I saw them do which I disapproved of, that I abstained from doing.”

Stanza.

Not e'en in jest a playful word is said,
 But to the wise, 'twill prove a fruitful theme.
 To fools, a hundred chapters may be read
 Of grave import ; to them they'll jesting seem.

STORY.

They asked one of the Shaikhs of Damascus, “ What is the true state of Sufism ? ”¹ He replied, “ Formerly they were a sect outwardly disturbed, but inwardly collected ; and at this day they are a tribe outwardly collected and inwardly disturbed.”

¹ The Sufis are a sect of Mohammedan Mystics, whose opinions, with regard to the soul, the Deity, and creation, very much resemble the esoteric doctrines of the Brahmans. They look upon the soul as an emanation from the Deity, to be reabsorbed into its source, and regard that absorption as attainable by contemplation.

Stanza.

While ever roams from place to place thy heart,
No peacefulness in solitude thou'l see ;
Hast thou estates, wealth, rank, the trader's mart ?
Be thy heart God's — this solitude may be.

STORY.

A king had reached the close of his life, and had no heir to succeed him. He made a will, that they should place the royal crown on the head of the first person who might enter the gates of the city in the morning, and should confide the government to him. It happened that the first person who entered the city gate was a beggar, who throughout his whole life had collected scrap after scrap, and sewn rag upon rag. The Pillars of the State, and ministers of the late king, executed his will, and bestowed on him the country and the treasure. The dervish carried on the government for a time, when some of the great nobles turned their necks from obeying him, and the princes of the surrounding countries rose up on every side to oppose him, and arrayed their armies against him. In short, his troops and his subjects were thrown into confusion, and a portion of his territory departed from his possession. The dervish was in a state of dejection at this circumstance, when one of his old friends, who was intimate with him in the time of his poverty, returned from a journey, and, finding him in this exalted posi-

tion, said, “Thanks be to God (may He be honored and glorified !) that thy lofty destiny has aided thee, and thy auspicious fortune has led thee on, so that thy rose has come forth from the thorn, and the thorn from thy foot, and thou hast arrived at this rank, ‘*surely with calamity comes rejoicing.*’¹

Couplet.

The bud now blossoms ; withered now is found :
The tree now naked ; now with leaves is crowned.”

He replied, “O brother ! condole with me ; for there is no room for felicitation. When thou sawest me, I was distressed for bread, and now I have the troubles of a world upon me.”

Distichs.

Have we no wordly gear — ’tis grief and pain :
Have we it — then its charms our feet enchain.
Can we than this a plague more troublous find,
Which absent, present, still afflicts the mind ?

Stanza.

Wouldst thou be rich, seek but content to gain ;
For this a treasure is that ne’er will harm.
If in thy lap some Dives riches rain,
Let not thy heart with gratitude grow warm ;
For, by the wisest, I have oft been told, —
The poor man’s patience better is than gold.

¹ “After pain comes pleasure ;” “Après la peine le plaisir.”

Couplet.

A locust's leg, the poor ant's gift, is more
Than the wild ass dressed whole from Bahram's¹ store.

STORY.

Having become weary of the society of my friends at Damascus, I set out for the wilderness of Jerusalem, and associated with the brutes, until I was made prisoner by the Franks, who set me to work along with Jews at digging in the fosse of Tripolis, till one of the principal men of Aleppo, between whom and myself a former intimacy had subsisted, passed that way and recognized me, and said, "What state is this? and how are you living?" I replied,

Stanza.

"From men to mountain and to wild I fled
Myself to heavenly converse to betake;
Conjecture now my state, that in a shed
Of savages I must my dwelling make."

Couplet.

Better to live in chains with those we love,
Than with the strange mid flow'rets gay to move.

¹ Bahram, the sixth of that name, was a king of Persia, called Gor, from his fondness for hunting the wild ass. This couplet is a sort of Oriental version of the widow's mite.

He took compassion on my state, and with ten dinars redeemed me from the bondage of the Franks, and took me along with him to Aleppo. He had a daughter, whom he united to me in the marriage-knot, with a portion of a hundred dinars. As time went on, the girl turned out of a bad temper, quarrelsome and unruly. She began to give a loose to her tongue, and to disturb my happiness, as they have said,

Distichs.

“ In a good man's house an evil wife
 Is his hell above in this present life.
 From a vixen wife protect us well,
Save us, O God! from the pains of hell.”

At length she gave vent to reproaches, and said, “ Art thou not he whom my father purchased from the Franks' prison for ten dinars?” I replied, “ Yes ! he redeemed me with ten dinars, and sold me into thy hands for a hundred.”

Distichs.

I've heard that once a man of high degree
 From a wolf's teeth and claws a lamb set free.
 That night its throat he severed with a knife,
 When thus complained the lamb's departing life,
 “ Thou from the wolf didst save me then, but now,
 Too plainly I perceive the wolf art thou.”

STORY.

One of the Syrian recluses had for years worshipped in the desert, and sustained life by feeding on the leaves of trees. The king of that region made a pilgrimage to visit him, and said, “ If thou thinkest fit, I will prepare a place for thee in the city that thou mayest have greater conveniences for devotion than here, and that others may be benefited by the blessing of thy prayers, and may imitate thy virtuous acts.” The devotee did not assent to these words. The nobles said, “ To oblige the king, the proper course is for thee to come into the city for a few days and learn the nature of the place ; after which, if the serenity of thy precious time suffers disturbance from the society of others, thou wilt be still free to choose.” They relate that the devotee entered the city, and that they prepared for him the garden of the king’s own palace, a place delightsome to the mind, and suited to tranquillize the spirit.

Distichs.

Like beauty’s cheek, bright shone its roses red ;
Its hyacinths — like fair ones’ ringlets spread —
Seemed babes, which from their mother milk ne’er
drew,
In winter’s cold so shrinkingly they grew.

Couplet.

*And the branches — on them grew pomegranate-flowers
Like fire, suspended there, mid verdant bowers.*

The king forthwith despatched a beautiful damsel to him.

Verse.

A young moon that e'en saints might lead astray,
Angel in form, a peacock in display,
When once beheld, not hermits could retain
Their holy state, nor undisturbed remain.

In like manner, after her, the king sent a slave, a youth of rare beauty and of graceful proportions.

Stanza.

*Round him, who seems cupbearer, people sink;
Of thirst they die, he gives them not to drink.*

The eyes that see him, still unsated crave,
As dropsy thirsts amid the Euphrates' wave.

The holy man began to feed on dainties and wear soft raiment, and to find gratification and enjoyment in fruits and perfumes, as well as to survey the beauty of the youth and of the damsel ; and the wise have said, “The ringlets of the beautiful are the fetters of reason and a snare to the bird of intelligence.”

Couplet.

In thy behoof, my heart, my faith, my intellect, I vow ;
In truth, a subtle bird am I ; the snare this day art thou.

In short, the bliss of his tranquil state began to decline ; as they have said,

Stanza.

“ All that exist — disciples, doctors, saints,
The pure and eloquent alike, all fail
When once this world’s base gear their minds attaints,
As flies their legs in honey vainly trail.”

At length the king felt a desire to visit him. He found the recluse altered in appearance from what he was before, with a florid complexion, and waxen fat, pillow'd on a cushion of brocade, and the fairy-faced slave standing at his head, with a fan of peacock’s feathers. The monarch was pleased at his felicitous state, and the conversation turned on a variety of subjects, till, at the close of it, the king said, “ Of all the people in the world, I value these two sorts most — the learned and the devout.” A philosophical and experienced vazir was present. He said, “ O king ! friendship requires that thou shouldst do good to both these two orders of men — to the wise give gold, that they may study the more ; and to the devout give nothing, that they may remain devout.”

Couplet.

To the devout, nor pence nor gold divide ;
If one receive it, seek another guide.

Stanza.

Kind manners, and a heart on God bestowed
 Make up the saint, without alms begged or bread
 That piety bequeathes. What though no load
 Of turquoise-rings on Beauty's fingers shed
 Their ray, nor from her ear the shimmering gem
 Depends ; 'tis Beauty still, and needs not them.

Stanza.

O gentle dervish ! blest with mind serene,
 Thou hast no need of alms or hermit's fare.
 Lady of beauteous face and graceful mien !
 Thou well the turquoise-ring and gauds canst spare.

Couplet.

Seek I for goods which not to me belong ;
 Then if men call me worldly they're not wrong.

STORY.

In conformity with the preceding story, an affair of importance occurred to the king. He said, "If the termination of this matter be in accordance with my wishes, I will distribute so many dirams to holy men." When his desire was accomplished, it became incumbent on him to fulfil his vow according to the conditions. He gave a bag of dirams to one of his favorite servants, and told him to distribute them among devout personages. They say that the servant was

shrewd and intelligent. He went about the whole day, and returned at night, and, kissing the dirams, laid them before the king, saying, "However much I searched for the holy men, I could not find them." The king replied, "What tale is this? I know that in this city there are four hundred saints." He answered, "O Lord of the earth! the devout accept them not, and he who accepts them is not devout." The king laughed and said to his courtiers, "Strong as my good intentions are toward this body of godly men, and much as I wish to express my favor toward them, I am thwarted by a proportionate enmity and rejection of them on the part of this saucy fellow, and he has reason on his side."

Couplet.

When holy men accept of coin from thee,
Leave them, and seek some better devotee.

STORY.

They asked a profoundly learned man his opinion as to pious bequests. He said, "If the allowance is received in order to tranquillize the mind, and obtain more leisure for devotion, it is lawful; but when people congregate for the sake of the endowment, it is unlawful."

Couplet.

For sacred leisure saints receive their bread,
Not to gain food that ease is furnished.

STORY.

A disciple said to his spiritual guide, "What shall I do, for I am harassed by people through the frequency of their visits to me, and my precious moments are disturbed by their coming and going." He replied, "Lend to all who are poor, and demand a loan of all who are rich, and they will not come about thee again."

Couplet.

If Islam's van a beggar should precede,
To China infidels would fly his greed.

STORY.

~ A band of dissolute fellows came to find fault with a dervish, and used unwarrantable language, and wounded his feelings. He carried his complaint before the chief of his order, and said, "I have undergone such and such." His chief replied, "O son! the patched robe of dervishes is the garment of resignation. Every one who in this garb endures not disappointment patiently is a pretender, and it is unlawful for him to wear the robe of the dervish."

Couplet.

A stone makes not great rivers turbid grow :
When saints are vexed their shallowness they show.

Stanza.

Hast thou been injured? suffer it and clear
Thyself from guilt in pardoning other's sin.
O brother! since the end of all things here
Is into dust to moulder, be thou in
Like humble mould, ere yet the change begin."

STORY.

(IN VERSE.)

List to my tale! In Baghdad once, dispute
Between a flag and curtain rose. Its suit
The banner, dusty and with toil oppressed,
Urged; and the curtain, angry, thus addressed:
"Myself and thou were comrades at one school;
Both now are slaves 'neath the same monarch's rule.
I in his service ne'er have rested,—still,
Whate'er the time, I journey at his will;
My foot is ever foremost in emprise;
Then why hast thou more honor in men's eyes?
With moon-faced slaves thy moments pass away;
With jasmine-scented girls thou mak'st thy stay.
I lie neglected still in servile hands,
Tossed by the winds my head, my feet in bands."
"The threshold is my couch," the curtain said,
"And ne'er, like thee, to heaven raise I my head:
He who exalts his neck with vain conceit,
Hurls himself headlong from his boasted seat."

STORY.

A pious man saw an athlete who was exasperated, and infuriated, foaming at the mouth. He said, "What is the matter with this man?" Some one answered, "Such a one has abused him." "What!" said the holy man, "this contemptible fellow can lift a stone of a thousand mans'¹ weight, yet has not the power to support a word.

Stanza.

Boast not thy strength or manhood while thy heart
Is swayed by impulse base ; — if man thou art,
Or woman, matters naught ; — but rather aim
All mouths to sweeten, — thus deserve the name
Of man ; for manliness doth not consist
In stopping others' voices with thy fist.

Stanza.

Though one could brain an elephant, yet he
Is not a man without humanity.
In earth the source of Adam's sons began ;
Art thou not humble? then thou art not man."

STORY.

A king was regarding a company of dervishes contemptuously. One of them, acute enough to divine his feelings, said, "O king ! we, in this world, are inferior

¹ A *man* or *mann* of Tabriz is ten pounds.

to thee in military pomp, but enjoy more pleasure, and are equal with thee in death, and superior to thee in the day of resurrection.

Distichs.

The conqueror may in every wish succeed ;
Of bread the dervish daily stands in need ;
But in that hour when both return to clay,
Naught but their winding-sheet they take away.
When man makes up his load this realm to leave,
The beggar finds less cause than kings to grieve.

The outward mark of a dervish is a patched garment and shaven head; but his essential qualities are a living heart and mortified passions.

Stanza.

Not at strife's door sits he ; when thwarted, ne'er
Starts up to contest ; all unmoved his soul.
He is no saint who from the path would stir,
Though a huge stone should from a mountain roll.

The dervish's course of life is spent in commemorating, and thanking, and serving, and obeying God ; and in beneficence and contentment ; and in the acknowledgement of one God and in reliance on Him ; and in resignation and patience. Every one who is endued with these qualities is, in fact, a dervish, though dressed in a tunic. But a babbler, who neglects prayer, and is given to sensuality, and the gratification

of his appetite ; who spends his days till night-fall in the pursuit of licentiousness, and passes his night till day returns in careless slumber ; eats whatever is set before him, and says whatever comes uppermost ; is a profligate, though he wear the habit of a dervish.

Stanza.

O thou ! whose outer robe is falsehood, pride,
 While inwardly thou art to virtue dead ;
 Thy curtain¹ of seven colors put aside,
 While th' inner house with mats is poorly spread."

STORY.

(IN VERSE.)

I saw some handfuls of the rose in bloom,
 With bands of grass suspended from a dome.
 I said, " What means this worthless grass, that it
 Should in the roses' fairy circle sit ? "
 Then wept the grass and said, " Be still ! and know
 The kind their old associates ne'er forego.
 Mine is no beauty, hue, or fragrance, true !
 But in the garden of the Lord I grew."
 His ancient servant I,
 Reared by His bounty from the dust;
 Whate'er my quality,

¹ It is customary in Persia to have a curtain at the portal of the house, the richness of which depends on the circumstances of the owner.

I'll in His favoring mercy trust.
No stock of worth is mine,
Nor fund of worship, yet He will
 A means of help divine ;
When aid is past, He'll save me still.
 Those who have power to free,
Let their old slaves in freedom live,
 Thou Glorious Majesty !
Me, too, Thy ancient slave, forgive.
Sa'di ! move thou to resignation's shrine,
O man of God ! the path of God be thine.
Hapless is he who from this haven turns,
All doors shall spurn him who this portal spurns.

STORY.

I never complained of the vicissitudes of fortune, nor suffered my face to be overcast at the revolution of the heavens, except once, when my feet were bare, and I had not the means of obtaining shoes. I came to the chief mosque of Kufah in a state of much dejection, and saw there a man who had no feet. I returned thanks to God and acknowledged his mercies, and endured my want of shoes with patience, and exclaimed,

Stanza.

“ Roast fowl to him that's sated will seem less
Upon the board than leaves of garden cress.
While, in the sight of helpless poverty,
Boiled turnip will a roasted pullet be.”

STORY.

A merchant met with the loss of a thousand dinars, and said to his son, “Thou must not tell any one of this matter.” The son replied, “O father! it is thy command; I will not tell; acquaint me, however, with the advantage to be derived from keeping the affair secret.” The father answered, “In order that we may not have two misfortunes to encounter — first, the loss of our money; and secondly, the malignant rejoicings of our neighbors.”

Couplet.

Do not to foes thy sufferings impart,
Lest, while they seem to grieve, they joy at heart.¹

STORY.

An intelligent young man, who possessed an ample stock of admirable accomplishments and a rare intellect, notwithstanding, uttered not a word whenever he was seated in the company of the wise. At length, his father said, “O son! why dost not thou also say somewhat of that thou knowest?” He replied, “I fear lest they should ask me something of which I am ignorant, and I should bring on myself disgrace.”

Stanza.

One day a Sufi (hast thou heard it told?)
By chance was hammering nails into his shoe:

¹ Literally, “While they repeat the deprecatory formula, There is no power or strength but in God.”

Then of his sleeve an officer caught hold,
And said, "Come thou ! and shoe my charger too ! "

Couplet.

Art silent? none can meddle with thee. When
Thou once hast spoken, thou must prove it then.

STORY.

A man with a harsh voice was reading the Koran in a loud tone. A sage passed by and asked, "What is thy monthly stipend?" He replied, "Nothing." "Wherefore, then," asked the sage, "dost thou give thyself this trouble?" He replied, "I read for the sake of God." "Then," said the sage, "for God's sake ! read not."

Couplet.

If in this fashion the Koran you read,
You'll mar the loveliness of Islam's creed.

STORY.

They asked Hasan Maimandi, "How is it that, although Sultan Mahmud has so many handsome slaves, every one of whom is the wonder of the world, and the marvel of the age, he has not such a regard or affection for any one as for Ayaz, who is not remarkable for beauty?" He replied, "Whatever pleases the heart appears fair to the eye."

Distichs.

The man for whom the Sultan shows esteem,
 Though bad in every act, will virtuous seem.
 But whom the monarch pleases to reject,
 None of his retinue will e'er affect.

Stanza.

When with antipathy we eye a man,
 We see in Joseph's beauty, want of grace :
 And, prepossessed, should we a demon scan,
 He'd seem a cherub with an angel's face.

STORY.

They shut up a parrot in a cage with a crow. The parrot was distressed at the ugly appearance of the other, and said, "What hateful form is this, and detested shape, and accursed face and unpolished manners? *O crow of the desert! twould that between me and thee were the space 'twixt east and west!*"

Stanza.

Should one at dawn arising thy face see,
 'Twould change to twilight gloom that morning's
 mirth.
 Such wretch as thou art should thy comrade be,
 But where could such a one be found on earth !

But still more strangely the crow, too, was harassed to death by the society of the parrot, and was utterly

chagrined by it. Reciting the deprecatory formula, "There is no power nor strength but in God,"¹ it complained of its fate, and, rubbing one upon the other the hands of vexation, it said, "What evil fate is this, and unlucky destiny, and fickleness of fortune ! It would have been commensurate with my deserts to have walked proudly along with another crow on the wall of a garden.

Couplet.

"Twill for a prison to the good suffice,
To herd them with the worthless sons of vice.

What crime have I committed in punishment for which my fate has involved me in such a calamity, and imprisoned me with a conceited fool like this, at once worthless and fatuous ?"

Stanza.

All would that wall with loathing fly
Which bore impressed thy effigy :
And if thy lot in Eden fell,
All others would make choice of Hell.

I have brought this example to show that, how strong soever the disgust a wise man may feel for a fool, a fool regards with a hundred times more aversion a wise man.

¹This means, "There is no striving against fate."

Couplets.

A pious man, mid dance and song, was seated with
the gay ;
One of Balkh's beauties saw him there, and marked the
mirth decay :
“ Do we, then, weary thee ? ” he said, “ at least, un-
cloud thy brow ;
For we, too, feel thy presence here is bitterness enow.

Quatrain.

This social band like roses is and lilies joined in one,
And mid them thou, a withered stick, upspringest all
alone ;
Like winter's cruel cold art thou, or like an adverse
blast,—
Thou sittest there like fallen snow, ice-bound and
frozen fast.”

STORY.

A man had a beautiful wife, who died, and his wife's mother, a decrepit old woman, on account of the marriage-settlement,¹ took up her abode, and fixed herself in his house. The man was vexed to death by her propinquity, yet he did not see how to get rid of her by reason of the settlement. Some of his friends came to inquire after him, and one of them said, “ How dost

¹ As he could not pay what he had covenanted to pay, when he married, his wife's relations indemnified themselves by saddling him with the old lady, his wife's mother.

thou bear the loss of thy beloved one?" He replied, "The not seeing my wife is not so intolerable to me as the seeing her mother."

Distichs.

The tree has lost its roses, but retains
Its thorn. The treasure's gone, the snake¹ remains.
'Tis better on the lance-point fixed to see
One's eye, than to behold an enemy.
'Tis well a thousand friendships to erase
Could we thereby avoid our foeman's face.

STORY.

I remember that in my youth I was passing along a street when I beheld a moon-faced beauty. The season was that of the month of July, when the fierce heat dried up the moisture of the mouth, and the scorching wind consumed the marrow of the bones. Through the weakness of human nature I was unable to support the power of the sun, and involuntarily took shelter under the shade of a wall, waiting to see if any one would relieve me from the pain I suffered, owing to the ardor of the sun's rays, and cool my flame with water. All of a sudden, from the dark portico of a house, I beheld a bright form appear, of such beauty that the tongue of eloquence would fail in narrating

¹ It is a popular Oriental notion that treasures are guarded by serpents.

her charms. She came forth as morn succeeding a dark night, or as the waters of life issuing from the gloom. She held in her hand a cup of snow-water, in which she had mixed sugar and the juice of the grape. I know not whether she had perfumed it with her own roses, or distilled into it some drops from the bloom of her countenance. In short, I took the cup from her fair hand, and drained its contents, and received new life. “*The thirst of my heart cannot be slaked with a drop of water, nor if I should drink rivers would it be lessened.*”

Stanza.

Most blest that happy one whose gaze intense
Rests on such face at each successive morn ;
The drunk with wine at midnight may his sense
Regain ; but not till the last day shall dawn
Will love's intoxication reach its bourne.

STORY.

They told to one of the Arabian kings the story of Laili and Majnun, and of the insanity which happened to him, so that, although possessed of high qualities and perfect eloquence, he betook himself to the desert and abandoned the reins of choice. After commanding them to bring him into his presence, the king began to rebuke him, saying, “What defect hast thou seen in the nobleness of man's nature that thou hast

taken up the habits of an animal, and bidden adieu to the happiness of human society?" Majnun wept and said,

Verse.

" *Oft have my friends reproached me for my love :
The day will come they'll see her and approve.*

Stanza.

Would that those who seek to blame me
Could thy face, O fairest ! see ;
Theirs would then the loss and shame be :
While amazed, intent on thee,
They would wound their hands while they
Careless with the orange¹ play :

That the truth of the reality might testify to the appearance I claim for her!" The king was inspired with a desire to behold her beauty, in order to know what sort of person it was who was the cause of such mischief. He commanded, and they sought for her, and, searching through the Arab families, found her, and brought her before the king, in the court of the royal pavilion. The king surveyed her countenance, and beheld a person of a dark complexion and weak form. She appeared to him so contemptible that he thought the meanest of the servants of his harem superior to her in beauty and grace. Majnun acutely discerned

¹ See poem, *Yusuf and Zulaikha*, page 504.

his thoughts and, said “ O king ! it is requisite to survey the beauty of Laili from the window of the eye of Majnun, in order that the mystery of the spectacle may be revealed to you.”

Distichs.

Unmoved with pity thou me hear'st complain ;
 I need a comrade who can share my pain :
 The livelong day I'd then my woes recite ;
 Wood with wood joined will ever burn more bright.

Verse.

“ *What passed within my hearing of the grove,
 O forest leaves! did ye but learn,
 Ye'd mourn with me. My friends! tell him whom love
 Has spared, I would he did but burn
 With lover's flames; he'd then my grief discern.*”

Verse.

Scars may be laughed at by the sound,
 But to a fellow-sufferer reveal
 Thy anguish. Of the hornet's wound
 What reck they who did never feel
 Its sting? Till fortune shall bring round
 Thy woes to thee, they will but seem
 The weak illusions of a dream.
 Do not my sufferings confound
 With those of others. Canst thou deem

One holding salt¹ can tell the pain of him
Who has salt rubbed upon his wounded limb?

STORY.

(IN VERSE.)

A gallant youth there was and fair
Pledged to a maid beyond compare ;
They on the sea, as poets tell,
Together in a whirlpool fell.
The boatman came the youth to save —
To snatch him from his watery grave :
But, mid those billows of despair,
He cried, “ My love ! my love is there !
Save her, oh save ! ” he said, and died ;
But with his parting breath he cried,
“ Not from that wretch love’s story hear
Who love forgets when peril’s near.”
Together thus these lovers died.
Be told by him who love has tried ;
For Sa’di knows each whim and freak
Of love, — as well its ways can speak
As Baghdad’s dwellers Arabic.
Hast thou a mistress ? her then prize,
And on all others close thine eyes.
Could Majnun and his Laili back return,
They might love’s story from this volume learn.

¹ This is a favorite comparison of Oriental poets. Rubbing salt on a wound is a proverbial expression with them.

STORY.

A king handed over his son to a teacher, and said, “This is my son ; educate him as one of thine own sons.” The preceptor spent some years in endeavoring to teach him without success, while his own sons were made perfect in learning and eloquence. The king took the preceptor to task, and said, “Thou hast acted contrary to thy agreement, and hast not been faithful to thy promise.” He replied, “O King ! education is the same, but capacities differ.”

Stanza.

Silver and gold 'tis true in stones are found ;
 Yet not all stones the precious metals bear :
 Canopus shines to earth's most distant bound ;
 But here gives leather — scented leather there.¹

STORY.

I have heard of an old doctor who said to a pupil, “If the minds of the children of men were as much fixed on the Giver of subsistence as they are on the subsistence itself, they would rise above the angels.”

Stanza.

Thou wast by God then not forgotten when
 Thou wast a seed — thy nature in suspense ;

¹ That is, the light of Canopus in one place causes the leather to be perfumed (a strange notion !), in another leaves it in its common state.

He gave thee soul and reason, wisdom, ken,
Beauty and speech, reflection, judgment, sense ;
He on thy hand arrayed thy fingers ten,
And thy arms fastened to thy shoulders. Whence
Canst thou then think, O thou most weak of men !
He'd be unmindful of thy subsistence ?

STORY.

I saw the son of a rich man seated at the head of his father's sepulchre, and engaged in a dispute with the son of a poor man, and saying, " My father's sarcophagus is of stone, and the inscription colored with a pavement of alabaster and turquoise bricks. What resemblance has it to that of thy father? which consists of a brick or two huddled together, with a few handfuls of dust sprinkled over it." The son of the poor man heard him, and answered, " Peace ! for before thy father can have moved himself under this heavy stone, my sire will have arrived in paradise. This is a saying of the Prophet : '*The death of the poor is repose.*'

Couplet.

Doubtless the ass, on which they do impose
The lightest burthen, also easiest goes.

Stanza.

The poor man, who the agony has borne
Of famine's pangs, treads lightly to the door

Of death. While one from blessings torn—
 From luxury and ease—will grieve the more
 To lose them. This is certain. Happier he
 Whom, like a captive, death from bonds sets free,
 Than great men, whom it hurries to captivity.”

MAXIMS ON THE DUTIES OF SOCIETY.

MAXIM.

Riches are for the sake of making life comfortable,
 not life for the sake of amassing riches. I asked a
 wise man, “Who is fortunate and who unfortunate?”
 He replied, “The fortunate is he who sowed and
 reaped; the unfortunate he who died and abandoned.”

Couplet.

Not for that worthless one a prayer afford,
 Who life in hoarding spent—ne'er spent his hoard.

MAXIM.

Two men have labored fruitlessly and exerted
 themselves to no purpose. One is the man who has
 gained wealth without enjoying it; the other he who
 has acquired knowledge but has failed to practise it.

Distichs.

How much soe'er thou learn'st, 'tis all vain;
 Who practised not, still ignorant remain.

A quadruped, with volumes laden, is
No whit the wiser or more sage for this :
How can the witless animal discern,
If books be piled on it? or wood to burn?

MAXIM.

Science is for the cultivation of religion, not for worldly enjoyments.

Couplet.

Who makes a gain of virtue, science, lore,
Is one who garners up, then burns his store.

MAXIM.

Three things lack permanency, uncombined with three other things : wealth without trading ; learning without instruction ; and empire without a strict administration of justice.

Stanza.

By courteous speech, politeness, gentleness,
Sometimes thou mayest direct the human will :
Anon by threats ; for it oft profits less
With sugar twice a hundred cups to fill,
Than from one colocynth its bitters to distil.

MAXIM.

To show pity to the bad is to oppress the good, and to pardon oppressors is to tyrannize over the oppressed.

Couplet.

When thou to base men giv'st encouragement,
Thou shar'st their sins, since thou them aid hast lent.

MAXIM.

No reliance can be placed on the friendship of princes, nor must we plume ourselves on the sweet voices of children, since that is changed by a caprice, and these by a single slumber.

Couplet.

On the mistress of a thousand hearts, do not thy love bestow ;
But if thou wilt, prepare eftsoons her friendship to forego.

MAXIM.

Reveal not to a friend every secret that thou possessest. How knowest thou whether at some time he may not become an enemy? Nor inflict on thy enemy every injury that is in thy power; perchance he may some day become thy friend. Tell not the secret that thou wouldest have continue hidden to any person, although he may be worthy of confidence; for no one will be so careful of thy secret as thyself.

Stanza.

Better be silent, than thy purpose tell
To others; and enjoin them secrecy.

O dolt ! keep back the water at the well,
For the swollen stream to stop thou'l vainly try.
In private, utter not a single word
Which thou in public wouldest regret were heard.

MAXIM.

Let thy words between two foes be such that if they
were to become friends thou wouldest not be ashamed.

Distichs.

Like fire is strife betwixt two enemies :
The luckless mischief-maker wood supplies.
Struck with confusion and ashamed is he,
If e'er the two belligerents agree.
Can we in this aught rational discern —
To light a fire which will ourselves first burn ?

Stanza.

In talk with friends speak soft and low,
Lest thy bloodthirsty foeman thee should hear :
A wall may front thee — true ! but dost thou know
If there be not behind a listening ear ?

MAXIM.

Whoever comes to an agreement with the enemies
of his friends, does so with the intention of injuring
the latter.

Couplet.

Eschew that friend, if thou art wise,
Who consorts with thy enemies.

MAXIM.

When, in transacting business, thou art in doubt,
make choice of that side from which the least injury
will result.

Couplet.

Reply not roughly to smooth language, nor
Contend with him who knocks at peace's door.

MAXIM.

Anger that has no limit causes terror, and unseasonable kindness does away with respect. Be not so severe as to cause disgust, nor so lenient as to make people presume.

Distichs.

Sternness and gentleness are best combined :
The leech both salves and scarifies, you find.
The sage is not too rigorous, nor yet
Too mild, lest men their awe of him forget :
He seeks not for himself too high a place ;
Nor will himself too suddenly abase.

Distichs.

Once to his sire a shepherd said, “ O Sage !
Teach me one maxim worthy of thy age.”
“ Use gentleness,” he said, “ yet not so much,
That the wolf be emboldened thee to clutch.”

MAXIM.

Two persons are the foes of a state and of religion
a king without clemency, and a religious man without
learning.

Couplet.

Ne’er to that king may states allegiance own,
Who bows not humbly at th’ Almighty’s throne.

MAXIM.

When an enemy has tried every expedient in vain,
he will pretend friendship, and then, by this pretext,
execute designs which no enemy could have effected.

MAXIM.

When thou knowest tidings that will pain the heart
of any one, be silent, so that another may be the first
to convey them.

Couplet.

O nightingale ! spring’s tidings breathe,
Ill rumors to the owls bequeath.

MAXIM.

Do not acquaint a king with the treason of any one unless when thou art assured that the disclosure will meet with his full approval, else thou art but laboring for thy own destruction.

Couplet.

Then, only then, to speak intend
When speaking can effect thy end.

MAXIM.

He who gives advice to a conceited man is himself in need of counsel.

MAXIM.

Be not caught by the artifice of a foe, nor purchase pride of a flatterer ; for the one has set the snare of hypocrisy, and the other has opened the mouth of greediness. The fool is puffed up with flattery, like a corpse whose inflated heels appear plump.

Stanza.

Heed not the flatterer's fulsome talk,
He from thee hopes some trifle to obtain ;
Thou wilt, shouldst thou his wishes balk,
Two hundred times as much of censure gain.

MAXIM.

Until some one points out to an orator his defects, his discourse will never be amended.

Couplet.

To vaunt of one's own speaking is not meet,
At fools' approval and one's own conceit.

MAXIM.

Every one thinks his own judgment perfect, and his own son beautiful.

Verse.

A Jew and Mussulman once so contended
That laughter seized me as their contest grew.
The true believer thus his cause defended :
“ Is this bond false, then may I die a Jew ! ”
The Jew replied : “ By Moses' books I vow that
‘Tis true, or else a Mussulman am I ! ”
So from earth's face were Wisdom's self to fly,
Not one could be amongst us found t' allow that
He judgment lacked, or himself stultify.

MAXIM.

Whosoever does no good when he has the ability to do it, in the time of inability to aid others will himself suffer distress.

Couplet.

Ill-starred, indeed, is he who injures men :
Is fortune adverse, he is friendless then.

MAXIM.

Affairs succeed by patience ; and he that is hasty falleth headlong.

Distichs.

I've in the desert with these eyes beheld
The hurrying pilgrim to the slow-stepped yield :
The rapid courser in the rear remains,
While the slow camel still its step maintains.

MAXIM.

There is no better ornament for the ignorant than silence, and did he but know this he would not be ignorant.

Stanza.

Hast thou not perfect excellence, 'tis best
To keep thy tongue in silence, for 'tis this
Which shames a man ; as lightness does attest
The nut is empty, nor of value is.

Stanza.

Once, in these words, a fool rebuked an ass,—
“ Go, thou who all thy life hast lived in vain ! ”

A sage said to him, “ Blockhead ! why dost pass
Thy time in this? Gibes will be all thy gain.
To learn of thee a brute no power has :
Learn thou of brutes in silence to remain.”

* * * * *

MAXIM.

Whoso sits with bad men will not see aught good.

Distichs.

With demons did an angel take his seat,
He'd learn but terror, treason, and deceit :
Thou from the bad wilt nothing learn but ill ;
The wolf will ne'er the furrier's office fill.

MAXIM.

Divulge not the secret faults of men ; for at the same time that thou disgracest them thou wilt destroy thy own credit.

MAXIM.

He that has acquired learning and not practised what he has learnt, is like a man who ploughs but sows no seed.

MAXIM.

Worship cannot be performed by the body without the mind, and a shell without a kernel will not do for merchandise.

MAXIM.

Not every one who is ready at wrangling is correct
in his dealings.

Couplet.

Forms enow beneath the mantle wear the outward
signs of grace ;
But if thou shouldst them unwimple, thou wouldst
find a grandam's face.

MAXIM.

Not every one whose outward form is graceful pos-
sesses the graces of the mind ; for action depends on
the heart, not on the exterior.

Stanza.

From a man's qualities a day's enough
To make us of his learning's limit sure.
Plume not thyself as though the hidden stuff
Thou of his heart hast reached ; nor be secure,
For not e'en long revolving years can tell
The foul things which in man unnoticed dwell.

MAXIM.

A weak man, who has the foolhardiness to contend
with a strong one, assists his adversary in destroying
himself.

Stanza.

He who was nursed in soft repose
Cannot with warriors to the battle go ;
Vain with his weakly arm to close,
And struggle with an iron-wristed foe.

MAXIM.

Whoso will not listen to advice aims at hearing himself reproached.

Couplet.

He who will not to friends' advice attend,
Must not complain when they him reprehend.

MAXIM.

Persons devoid of virtue cannot endure the sight of the virtuous ; just as market curs, when they see dogs of the chase, bark at them, but dare not approach them.

MAXIM.

When a base fellow cannot vie with another in merit, he will attack him with malicious slander.

Couplet.

Weak envy absent virtue slanders, — Why ?
Since it is dumb, perforce, when it is by.

MAXIM.

Wise men eat late; devout men but half satisfy their appetites; and hermits take only enough to support life; the young eat till the dishes are removed, and the old till they sweat; but the Kalandars¹ stuff till they have no room in their stomachs to breathe, and not a morsel is left on the table for any one.

Couplet.

The glutton for two nights no sleep can get;
The first from surfeit, the next from regret.

MAXIM.

Whoso slays not his enemy when he is in his power
is his own enemy.

Couplet.

When a stone is in the hand; on a stone the serpent's
pate;

He is not a man of sense who to strike should hesitate.

There are, however, persons who think the opposite of this advisable, and have said, "It is better to pause in the execution of prisoners, inasmuch as the option [of slaying or pardoning them] is retained. Whereas, if a prisoner be put to death without deliberation, it is

¹ A sort of fakir.

probable that the best course will be let slip, since the step is irremediable."

Couplets.

'Tis very easy one alive to slay ;
Not so to give back life thou tak'st away :
Reason demands that archers patience show,
For shafts once shot return not to the bow.

MAXIM.

The sage who engages in controversy with ignorant people must not expect to be treated with honor; and if a fool should overpower a philosopher by his loquacity, it is not to be wondered at, for a common stone will break a jewel.

Couplet.

What marvel is it if his spirits droop ?
A nightingale — and with him crows to coop !

Couplets.

What if a vagabond on merit rail ?
Let not the spirits of the worthy fail :
A common stone may break a golden cup ;
Its value goes not down, the stone's not up.

MAXIM.

It is not right to estrange in a moment a friend whom it takes a lifetime to secure.

Triplet.

'Tis years before the pebble can put on
The ruby's nature. — Wilt thou on a stone
In one short moment mar what time has done?

MAXIM.

Purpose without power is mere weakness and deception; and power without purpose is fatuity and insanity.

Couplet.

Have judgment, counsel, sense, and then bear rule;
Wealth, empire, are self-murder to the fool.

The liberal man, who enjoys and bestows, is better than the devotee, who fasts and lays by. Whoso abandons lust in order to gain acceptance with the world has fallen from venial desires into those which are unpardonable.

Couplet.

Hermits, who are not so through piety,
Darken a glass and then attempt to see.

Couplet.

Little to little added much will grow:
The barn's store, grain by grain, is gathered so.
Many littles make a mickle, many drops a flood.

MAXIM.

It is not right for a learned man to pass over leniently the foolish impertinences of the vulgar, for this is detrimental to both parties: the awe which the former ought to inspire is diminished, and the folly of the latter augmented.

Couplet.

Art thou with fools too courteous and too free,
Their pride and folly will augmented be.

MAXIM.

People forget the name of him whose bread they have not tasted during his lifetime. Joseph the just (Peace be on him !), during the famine in Egypt, would not eat so as to satisfy his appetite, that he might not forget the hungry. It is the poor widow that relishes the grapes, not the owner of the vine-yard.¹

Couplets.

He who in pleasure and abundance lives,
What knows he of the pang that hunger gives?
He can affliction best appreciate,
Who has himself experienced the same state.

¹ That is, We estimate blessings when we are deprived of them and value highly what is beyond our reach.

Stanza.

O thou ! who rid'st a mettled courser, see
 How toils, mid mire, the poor thorn-loaded ass !
 From poor men's houses, let no fire for thee
 Be brought. The wreaths which from their chimney
 pass
 Are sighs wrung from their hearts by destiny.¹

MAXIM.

Two things are impossible : to obtain more food
 than what Providence destines for us ; and to die before
 the time known to God.

Stanza.

Fate is not altered by a thousand sighs ;
 Complain or render thanks — arrive it will :
 The angel at whose bidding winds arise
 Cares little for the widow's lamp, if still
 It burns, or by the storm extinguished dies.

MAXIM.

The envious man begrudgeth God's blessings, and
 is the foe of the innocent.

Stanza.

A wretched crack-brained fellow once I saw,
 Who slandered one of lofty dignity ;

¹ That is, do not wring from the poor the smallest trifles. The comparison between smoke and a sigh is a simile in which Orientals delight, inept as it appears to us.

I said, “ Good sir ! I grant thee that a flaw
May in thy fortunes be observed,— but why
Impute it to the man who lives more happily ? ”

Second Stanza.

Oh ! on the envious man invoke no curse,
For of himself, poor wretch ! accursed is he ;
On him no hatred can inflict aught worse
Than his self-fed, self-torturing enmity.

MAXIM.

A student without the inclination to learn is a lover
without money ; and a pilgrim without spirituality is a
bird without wings ; and a devotee without learning is
a house without a door.



SELECTIONS FROM THE BUSTAN.

THE MOTH AND THE FLAME.¹

ONE night—I do remember—when mine eyes
Closed not. I heard a talking in this wise :

Moth said to Lamp-flame, “Ah, my Well-belovèd !
I am a Lover ; this is no surprise

“If I do weep and burn ; but thou ! but thou !
Why do I see thee weeping, burning, now ?”

The Lamp replied, “*Shirin-i-man !* Soft Lover !
The honey of my life melts from my brow !”

It said, “Oh, tearful Lover ! cease to sigh,
Passion’s worst pangs thou knowest not, as I :

Leave claiming, leave lamenting, or come boldly !
Nor power, nor patience of Love’s mystery

“Hast thou, who fliest from my naked fire,
Desiring, yet afraid of thy Desire !

Hither and thither dost thou flutter, fearful ;
But I consume, exhale, glow, and expire.

“If flame of Love thy silver feathers scorch,
Look upon me, who am Love’s kindled Torch !

¹ Translated by Sir Edwin Arnold. This celebrated poem is usually called “The Moth and the Candle.”

Think on the blaze and torrent of my burning,
Forget my splendor, lighting court and porch ! ”

There lingered some little of the night,
When one of Pari-face put out that light ;

The smoke rose like a parting soul : it whispered,
“ Look, Lover ! now, indeed, Love endeth right.

“ This is the Road ! *Rah in ast!* learn of me ;
Dying thou gainest Love’s best ecstasy ! ”

* * * * *

Make over Lover slain no lamentation ;
Cry *Shukur !* thanks ! — He is accepted ; he.

Oh, if thou be’st true Lover, wash not hand
From that dear stain of Love ! from worldly brand
Of wealth and self-love wash it ! At the last
Those win, who spite of Fortune’s tempests, stand,

Glad to wreck all for Love. I say to thee —
I, Sa'di — launch not on that boundless Sea !
But, if thou puttest forth, hoist sail, quit anchor !
To storm and wave trust thyself hardily !

STORY OF THE PEARL.¹

From a cloud there descended a droplet of rain ;
”Twas ashamed when it saw the expanse of the main,
Saying, “ Who may I be, where the sea has its run ?
If the sea has existence, I truly have none ! ”

¹ Translations by G. S. Davie.

Since in its own eyes the drop humble appeared,
In its bosom, a shell with its life the drop reared ;
The sky brought the work with success to a close,
And a famed royal pearl from the rain-drop arose.
Because it was humble it excellence gained ;
Patiently waiting till success was obtained.

THE DEATH OF SA'DI'S SON.

At Sana¹ a young child of mine melted away ;
Of all that occurred to me, what shall I say ?
A Joseph-like picture the Fates never gave,
But was, Jonah-like, gulped by the fish of the grave.
In this garden, a cypress ne'er reached any height,
But the tempests of fate pulled its roots from their site.
No wonder that roses will blow on the ground,
When, beneath it, so many rose-bodies sleep sound !
To my heart, I said, " Die, thou disgrace to mankind !
The child goes off pure, the old man, vile in mind ! "

Out of love and distress, for his stature alone,
From his tomb I extracted a panel of stone.
On account of my dread, in that dark, narrow place,
My disconsolate state changed the hue of my face.
When I came to myself, from that horrible fear,
From my darling, loved child, this arrived at my ear :
" If this region of darkness produced in you fright,
Take care, when you enter, to carry a light ! "
If you wish that the night of the tomb should appear

¹ Sana, the capital of Arabia Felix, where Sa'di's second marriage occurred.

Bright as day, light the lamp of your actions while here !
 Shakes the husbandman's body, from fever and care,
 Peradventure the palms should not luscious dates bear.
 Some covetous men the opinion maintain,
 That, without sowing wheat, they'll a harvest obtain !
 He who planted the root, Sa'di, on the fruit feeds !
 He will gather the harvest, who scattered the seeds !

PATIENCE AND CONTENTMENT.

In a generous man's spirit perfection is bred ;
 If no money he owns, what's the harm or the dread ?
 Were a miser with Crœsus in riches to range,
 Do not think that his miserly spirit would change !
 If a liberal person obtains not his bread,
 His spirit is rich, just as if he were fed.
 The giving's the ground and the means, the sown field ;
 Bestow ! that the root fertile branches may yield.
 I would wonder where God, who makes man out of
 clay,
 To make his humanity vanish away,
 In holding up wealth, do not strive to excel !
 For water when stagnant emits a bad smell.
 In munificence labor ! for water that flows,
 By the favor of Heaven to a mighty flood grows !
 If a miser should fall from his wealth and estate,
 Very rarely again will his riches be great.
 If you are a jewel of worth, do not fret !
 For time will not cause your existence to set.
 A clod may be lying exposed on the way ;

Yet I do not see any one heed to it pay.
If a clipping of gold should escape from the shears,
With a candle they search for it, till it appears.
From the heart of a stone they can crystal obtain ;
Where under the rust does a mirror remain ?
The manners must please and exhibit much grace,
For coming and going are Fortune and Place.

THE SUFI AND THE SLANDERER.

Said a man to a Sufi, with sanctity blest,
“ You know not what some one behind you expressed.”
He said, “ Silence ! O brother ! and sleep it away !
It is best not to know what your enemies say !
Those people who carry the words of a foe,
Than enemies, truly, more enmity show.
The remarks of a foe, to a friend no one bears,
Excepting the man who his enmity shares.
A foe cannot speak with such hardness to me,
That from hearing, my body should shivering be !
You are worse than a foe ! with your lips you unfold
The same that the foe to you privately told ! ”
A talebearer gives to old war a fresh life,
And urges a good, gentle person to strife.
Fly away from that comrade, while strength in you lies !
Who says unto sleeping sedition, “ Arise ! ”
A man in a pit, with his feet firmly bound,
Is better than spreading disturbance around.
Between two, an encounter resembles a fire,
And the ill-omened tell-tales the fuel supplier.

SYMPATHY FOR ORPHANS.

A shade o'er the head of the orphan boy put !
 Disperse all his sighs and his sorrows uproot !
 You know not why he has this helplessness seen !
 Does a tree without root ever show itself green ?
 When you see the sad head of an orphan bent low,
 On the face of your son, do not kisses bestow !
 If an orphan should weep, who will purchase relief ?
 And should he be vexed, who will share in his grief ?
 Take care ! lest he weeps, for the great throne on high
 Will tremble and shake, should an orphan child cry !
 By kindness, the tears from his pure eyes displace !
 By compassion, disperse all the dust from his face !
 If his own sheltering shadow has gone from his head,
 Take him under your own fostering shadow instead !
 I at that time the head of a monarch possessed,
 When I let it recline on my own father's breast ;
 If a fly on my body made bold to alight,
 The hearts of a number were grieved at the sight.
 If now to a dungeon they captive me bear,
 Not one of my friends to assist me would care.
 The sufferings of poor orphan children I know ;
 In my childhood, my father to God had to go.

DEALING WITH ENEMIES.

Until your diplomacy terminates right,
 It is better to flatter your foe, than to fight.
 When, by force, you're unable to vanquish your foes,
 By favors, the portal of strife you must close !

If you fear lest you be by an enemy stung,
With the charm of munificence, tie up his tongue !
Give your enemy money? — not thorns from a hedge !
For munificence blunts all the teeth that have edge.
By skill, you can coax and enjoy earthly bliss ;
The hand you can't bite, it is proper to kiss !
By management, Rustem will come to the noose,
From whose coil, Asfandyar¹ could not cast himself
loose.

You can find the occasion your foe's skin to rend ;
Take care of him ! then, as you would of a friend.
Be cautious in fighting with one you despise !
From a drop, I have oft seen a torrent arise.
While you can, let not knots on your eyebrows be
seen !

An opponent is best as a friend, although mean.
His foe shows delight, and his friend shows distress,
Whose friends are, in count, than his enemies less.
With an army exceeding your own, do not fight !
For you can't with your finger a lancet's point smite.
And should you be stronger in war than your foe,
To the weak, 'tis unmanly oppression to show !
Though you've lion-like hands and an' elephant's force,
Peace is better than war, as a matter of course.
When the hand has by every deception been torn,
The hand to the sword may be lawfully borne.
Should your foe wish for peace, his request do not
spurn !

¹ Asfandyar, a Persian king, son of Darius-Hystaspes, lassoed by Rustem.

And should he seek battle, the reins do not turn !
 For should he resolve to resist in the field,
 The strength and the awe of a thousand you'll wield.
 If his foot he has placed in the stirrup of war,
 You won't be arraigned at the Great Judgment Bar.
 Be prepared, too, for war, should sedition awake !
 For kindness to blackguards is quite a mistake.
 If you talk in an affable way to a wretch,
 His presumption and arrogance higher will stretch.
 When your enemy, vanquished, approaches your gate,
 Cast revenge from your heart and cast ire from your
 pate !

You should kindness bestow when he asks for your
 care ;

Be gracious ! and of his deceptions, beware !
 From an agèd man's counselling turn not away !
 For he knows his work well who has lived to be gray !
 And should they remove from its site the stronghold—
 The youth with the sword and with wisdom the old —
 In the thick of the fight, bear a refuge in mind !
 What know you which side will the victory find ?
 When you see that your army has lost in the strife,
 Alone, do not cast to the wind your sweet life !
 Should your place be the border, make running your
 care !

And if in the middle, the foe's raiment wear !
 If you number two thousand — two hundred your foe,—
 When night has arrived from his clime you should go !
 At night, Fifty horsemen from lying in wait,
 Like Five Hundred, a noise on the ground will create.

When you wish to accomplish some marches by night,
First, look for the ambushes, hidden from sight !
When one of two armies has marched for a day,
The strength from his hands will have dwindled away ;
At your leisure the army exhausted attack !
For the fool has himself placed a load on his back.
When you've vanquished your foe, do not lower your
flag !

Lest again he should gather his forces, and brag.
In pursuit of the fugitives, go not too far !
For you should not lose sight of your comrades in war.
When the air, from war's dust, like a cloud to you shows,
Around you, with spears and with swords, they will
close.

From searching for plunder, the soldier refrains,
Who, alone, at the back of the monarch remains.
To an army, the duty of guarding the king,
Is better than fight in the battle-field's ring.

OF SA'DI'S JOURNEY TO HINDUSTAN AND THE DEPRAVITY OF IDOLATRY.

An ivory idol I saw at Somnat,¹
Begemmed, as in paganish times was Monat.²
So well had the sculptor its features designed,
That an image more perfect no mortal could find.
Caravans from each district were moving along ;

¹ Somnat, a famous Hindu temple in Guzerat, destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni.

² Monat, one of the chief idols of pagan Arabia.

To look at that spiritless image they throng.
 Kings of China and Chihil, like Sa'di, forsooth !
 From that hard-hearted idol were longing for truth.
 Men of eloquence, gathered from every place,
 Were beseeching in front of that dumb idol's face.
 I was helpless to clear up the circumstance, how .
 The Animate should to the inanimate bow?
 To a pagan with whom I had something to do —
 A companion well spoken, a chum of mine, too —
 I remarked in a whisper, “ O Brahmin, so wise !
 At the scenes in this place I experience surprise !
 About this helpless form they are crazed in their mind,
 And in error's deep pit are as captives confined.
 Its hands have no strength, and its feet have no pace ;
 And if thrown on the ground 'twould not rise from its
 place.
 Don't you see that its eyes are but amber, let in ?
 To seek for good faith in the blind is a sin ! ”
 That friend at my speech to an enemy turned ;
 He seized me, and, fire-like, from anger he burned.
 He told all the pagans and temple old men ;
 I saw not my welfare in that meeting then.
 Since the crooked road seemed unto them to be right,
 The straight road very crooked appeared in their sight ;
 For although a good man may be pious and wise,
 He's an ignorant fool in the ignorant's eyes.
 I was helpless to aid as a man being drowned ;
 Except in abasement no method I found.
 When you see that a fool has malevolence shown,
 Resignation and meekness give safety alone.

The chief of the Brahmins I praised to the skies :
“ Of the Zend and Asta¹ oh, expounder most wise !
With this idol’s appearance I’m satisfied, too ;
For the face and the features are charming to view.
Its figure appears very choice in my sight ;
But regarding the truth I am ignorant, quite.
I am here as a traveller a very short while,
And a stranger knows seldom the good from the vile.
You’re the queen of the chess-board and therefore aware;
And the monarch’s adviser of this temple fair.
To worship by mimicking, doubtless, is wrong ;
Oh, happy the pilgrim whose knowledge is strong !
What truths in the figure of this idol lie ?
For the chief of its worshippers, truly, am I ! ”
The face of the old Brahmin glowed with delight ;
He was pleased and said, “ Oh, thou whose statements
are right !
Your question is proper, your action is wise —
Whoever seeks truth will to happiness rise.
Like yourself, too, on many a journey I’ve been,
And idols not knowing themselves I have seen,
Save this, which each morning, just where it now stands,
To the great God of Justice upraises its hands !
And if you are willing, remain the night here !
And to-morrow, the secret to you will be clear.”
At the chief Brahmin’s bidding I tarried all night ;
In the well of misfortune, like Bizhan’s² my plight.

¹ Zend and Asta, religious books of the Magi.

² Bizhan, grandson of Rustem, confined in a well by Afrasiab for being caught in his palace in company with his daughter.

The night seemed as long as the last Judgment Day ;

The pagans, unwashed, round me feigning to pray.

The priests very carefully water did shun ;

Their armpits like carrion exposed in the sun !

Perhaps a great sin I had done, long before,

That I on that night so much punishment bore.

All the night I was racked in this prison of grief,

With one hand on my heart, one in prayer for relief ;

When the drummer, with suddenness, beat his loud drum,

And the cock crowed the fate of the Brahmin to come.

Unresisted, the black-coated preacher, the night,

Drew forth from his scabbard the sword of daylight.

On this tinder, the morning fire happened to fall,

And the world in a moment was brilliant to all.

You'd have said that all over the country of Zang,¹

From a corner, the Tartars had suddenly sprung !

The pagans depraved, with unpurified face,

Came from door, street, and plain to the worshipping-place.

The city and lanes were of people bereft ;

In the temple, no room for a needle was left.

I was troubled from rage and from sleeplessness dazed,

When the idol its hands upward, suddenly, raised.

All at once, from the people, there rose such a shout,

You'd have said that the sea in a rage had boiled out.

¹ Zang, Zanzibar, in Africa.

When the temple became from the multitude free,
The Brahmin all smiles gazed intently at me :
“ I am sure that your scruples have vanished,” he said,
“ Truth has made itself manifest, falsehood has fled.”
When I saw he was slave to an ignorant whim,
And that fancies absurd were established in him,
Respecting the truth, I no more could reveal,
For from scoffers, ’tis proper the truth to conceal.
When you find yourself under a tyrant’s command,
It would scarcely be manly to break your own hand.
I wept for a time, that he might be deceived,
And said, “ At the statement I made, I am grieved ! ”
At my weeping, the pagans’ hearts merciful proved —
Is it strange that a stone by the torrent is moved ?
In attendance, they ran to me, very much pleased ;
And in doing me honor my hands they all seized.
Asking pardon I went to the image of bone —
In a chair made of gold on a teak-timber throne —
A kiss to the hand of the idol I gave,
Saying, “ Curse it and every idolatrous slave ! ”
A pagan I was for a little, in name ;
In discussing the Zend, I a Brahmin became !
When myself, “ *one of trust,*” in the temple I found,
I could scarcely from joy keep myself on the ground.

I fastened the door of the temple one night,
And, scorpion-like, ran to the left and the right.
All under and over the throne I then pried,
And a curtain embroidered with gold I espied ;
A fire-temple prelate in rear of the screen,
With the end of a rope in his hands, could be seen.

The state of affairs I at once saw aright —
 Like David¹ when steel grew like wax in his sight.
 For, of course, he has only the rope to depress,
 When the idol upraises its hands for redress !
 Ashamed was the Brahmin at seeing my face —
 For to have any secret exposed 's a disgrace.
 He bolted, and I in pursuit of him fell,
 And speedily tumbled him into a well ;
 For I knew that the Brahmin escaping alive,
 To compass my death would incessantly strive.
 And were I despatched he would happiness feel,
 Lest, living, I might his base secret reveal.
 When you know of the business a villain has planned,
 Put it out of his power, when he falls to your hand.
 For if to that blackguard reprieve you should give,
 He will not desire that you longer should live.
 When at service he places his head at your gate,
 If he can, he will surely your head amputate !
 Your feet, in the track of a cheat do not place !
 If you do, and discover him, show him no grace !
 I despatched the impostor with stones, without dread,
 For tales are not told by a man when he 's dead.
 When I found that I caused a disturbance to spread,
 I abandoned that country and hastily fled.
 If a fire in a cane-brake you cause to rise,
 Look out for the tigers therein, if you're wise !
 The young of a man-biting snake do not slay !
 If you do, in the same dwelling-place do not stay !

¹ David was supposed to be able to make iron as soft as wax by his touch.

When you've managed a hive, full of bees, to excite,
Run away from the spot ! or you'll suffer their spite.
At one sharper than you, don't an arrow despatch !
When you've done it, your skirt¹ in your teeth you
should catch !

No better advice Sa'di's pages contain ;
“ When a wall's undermined, do not near it re-
main ! ”

I travelled to Sind, after that Judgment Day ;
By Yemen and Mecca I thence took my way.
From the whole of the bitterness, Fate made me meet,
My mouth till to-day has not shown itself sweet.
By the aiding of Bu-Bakar-Sad's fortune fair —
Whose like not a mother has borne nor will bear —
From the sky's cruel hardness, for justice I sought ;
In this shadow diffuser, a refuge I got.

Like a slave, for the empire I fervently pray :
“ O God, cause this shadow forever to stay ! ”
He applied not the salve to my wound's need alone,
But becoming the bounty and favor his own.
Meet thanks for his favors, when could I repeat ?
Even if in his service my head changed to feet !

When these miseries past I experienced joy ;
Yet some of the subjects my conscience annoy.
One is, when the hand of petition and praise,
To the shrine of the Knower of Secrets I raise,
The thoughts of that puppet of China arise,

¹ To be better able to run away by catching up the skirt in the teeth. It is a common custom to tuck up the skirt and fasten it in the girdle round the loins.

And cover with dust my self-valuing eyes ;
I know that the hand I stretched forth to the shrine
Was not lifted by any exertion of mine !
Men of sanctity do not their hands upward bring,
But the powers unseen pull the end of the string.
Ope's the doors of devotion and well-doing, still,
Every man has not power a good work to fulfil.
This same is a bar ; for to court to repair,
Is improper, except the king's order you bear.
No man can the great key of destiny own,
For absolute power is the Maker's alone.
Hence, oh travelling man on the straight path Divine !
The favor is God the Creator's, not thine.
Since, unseen, He created your mind pure and wise,
From your nature no action depraved can arise.
The same who has poison produced in the snake,
The sweetness produced by the bee, too, did make.
When He wishes to change to a desert your land,
He first makes the people distressed at your hand ;
And should His compassion upon you descend,
To the people through you He will comfort extend.
That you walk the right road do not boast, I advise !
For the Fates took your hand, and you managed to rise.
By these words you will benefit if you attend ;
You will reach pious men if their pathway you wend.
You will get a good place if the Fates are your guide ;
On the table of honor rich fare they'll provide.
And yet 'tis not right that you eat all alone,
For the poor, helpless Dervish some thought should
be shown.

HAFIZ.

DURING the golden age of Persian poetry there was no poet more popular than Hafiz, the greatest lyric writer of Persia. The exact dates of his birth and death are unknown, but he was born in his beloved city of Shiraz, in the first part of the fourteenth century, and died, according to the inscription or chronogram on his tomb, in 1388¹ A.D. His biographers say that he did not live later than 1391, thus making him an exact contemporary of Chaucer.

Hafiz, from the Arabic word for memory, was his poetical name and signified that he knew by heart the Koran, his real name being Shams-ud-Din Mohammad, which means Son of Faith. There is very little accurate knowledge of his early or domestic life, but there is a tradition that he was the son of a baker in Shiraz; at all events he seems to have lived a life of self-imposed poverty, for he regarded it as necessary to genius.

In the following story we find the first evidence of his gift for song. His uncle began a poem on Sufism and could not get beyond the first line. Hafiz, during his uncle's absence, finished the verse, and when this was discovered, his uncle, although annoyed, ordered Hafiz to finish the poem, at the same time cursing him and his works, exclaiming, "They shall bring the curse of insanity on all who read them!" and some people believe that this curse actually clings round his verses. Indeed, he has been compared to Anacreon "with his maddening spell," and even is said to have quaffed the cup of immortality. The legend is this: —

¹ Sir Gore Ouseley's statement.

"About four leagues from the city of Shiraz is a place called Pir-i-sabz, or the 'Green Old Man,' and a popular superstition prevailed that whoever watched there forty nights without sleep would become a great poet. Hafiz, when a youth, resolved to try the adventure; he was at this time in love with a beautiful 'fair one,' whose name of Shakhi Nebat, expressed a 'branch of sugar cane;' but he had a powerful rival in the Prince of Shiraz. Like Ferhad, the lover of Shirin, he was not to be daunted by the rank of him who pretended to the smiles of his charming favorite. Every morning he walked before the house of his coy mistress, anxiously watching for some sign of recognition which might give him hope; at noon he rested, and at night repaired to the place of the 'green old man,' and there took up his watchful station.

"This he continued for thirty-nine nights, and on the fortieth morning was charmed to observe that his mistress beckoned to him from the balcony, and invited him to enter. She received him with enthusiasm, declaring her preference of a bright genius to the son of a king. On the approach of night he hurried away, bent on finishing the adventure. Early on the morning, after his agitated fortieth night, the young poet perceived an aged man approaching. He could not see from whence he came, and could scarcely define his figure, which was wrapt in a green mantle; in his hand he bore a cup containing a crystal liquor, which sparkled and foamed as if it would overleap its narrow bounds. The aged man held out the vase to Hafiz, who, seizing it with avidity, drank an inspiring draught, and found in it the gift of immortal poesy."

At one time Hafiz became a teacher of the Koran in a college in Baghdad, and here the poet read from his own verses, the fame of which drew great numbers of pupils to him. Indeed he himself says, "O Hafiz! the fame of thine enchanting witchery hath reached the bounds of Egypt and China, and the extremities of Kai and Rum."

On one occasion he started to visit India at the invitation of the Sultan Mahmud Shah Ben Meni, but fell among robbers and was stripped of everything. He was rescued by two merchants who knew of his fame. In their company he embarked for India at Hormaz on the Persian Gulf; but the ship was wrecked and Hafiz, escaping, returned to Shiraz. Hafiz wrote during turbulent times. Shiraz, which he seems to have loved no less than Dante loved Florence, was conquered five or six times; kings came and went and the bloody drama moved on, yet there is hardly a reference to it in his poems. His first patron, Abu Ishak, was beheaded in front of the ruins of Persepolis, a tragedy evidently seen by the poet. In 1388 the great Timur¹ (Tamerlane) overran ancient Persia, and, it is said, emphasized his victory by a tower of 90,000 human heads. And this terrible conqueror ordered Hafiz to be brought before him because of the following line in his famous ode:²—

"For the black mole on thy cheek, I would give the cities of Samarkand and Bokhara."

"Art thou the man," Timur cried, "who has been bold enough to offer my two great cities, Samarkand and Bokhara, for the black mole on the cheek of thy mistress?"

"Yes, sir," replied the undaunted poet, "and by such acts of generosity have I been reduced to my present state of destitution, and compelled to solicit your assistance." This reply so pleased the astonished ruler that he dismissed the poet with a princely gift.

Hafiz was married, and in an ode laments his wife's death,³ as he does that also of an unmarried son.⁴ Of his wife he writes, "Then said my heart, I will rest me in this city which is illuminated by her presence; already her feet were bent upon a longer journey and my poor heart

¹ A descendant of Genghis Khan, the Mongol warrior.

² See page 346.

³ See page 378.

⁴ See page 372.

knew it not." And in the following expression of his love for her he has been compared to Shakespeare : " Open my grave when I am dead, and thou shalt see a cloud of smoke rising out from it ; then shalt thou know that the fire still burns in my dead heart — yea, it has set my very winding sheet alight."¹

Unlike Sa'di, Hafiz, with one or two unfortunate exceptions,² could not be persuaded to leave Shiraz, of which he sings : —

" May every blessing be the lot
O fair Shiraz, earth's loveliest spot !
O Heaven ! bid Time its beauties spare,
Nor print his wasteful traces there.

" Still be thou blest of Him that gave
Thy stream, sweet Ruknabad, whose wave
Can every human ill assuage,
And life prolong to Chizer's age.

" And oh ! the gale that wings its way
"Twixt Jaffrabad and Moscalla,
How sweet a perfume does it bear !
How grateful is its amber air !

" Ye who mysterious joys would taste,
Come to this sacred city — haste ;
Its saints, its sages, seek to know,
Whose breasts with heavenly rapture glow.

" And say, sweet gale -- for thou canst tell —
With lovely Laili was it well,
When last you passed the maiden by,
Of wayward will and witching eye ?

" Why, Hafiz, when you feared the day
That tore you from her arms away,
Oh ! why so thankless for the hours
You passed in Laili's lovely bowers ? "

¹ See page 384, Ode XXXVI.

² See page 356, Ode VIII.

When Hafiz died in 1389 his enemies refused his body the customary religious rites of burial, because of his fearless writings, and his early manner of living, which scandalized the orthodox. But the matter was settled by drawing lots from his own works. A child drew a slip of paper from a bowl, containing other slips, upon which was written :—

“ Withdraw not your steps from the obsequies of Hafiz,
Though immersed in sin he will rise into Paradise.”

And so Hafiz was buried in consecrated ground in Moscalla on the banks of the Ruknabad, about two miles from Sa'di's tomb. Sixty years later Sultan Baber erected over his grave a monument of white marble. On the oblong marble slab which marks the poet's grave are inscribed two odes from his *Divan*. One is in the centre, and the other around the margin, sculptured in beautiful characters.¹

Hafiz's *Divan* has been consulted just as if it were an oracle. Kings have travelled to the poet's tomb to read their fate in the beautiful volume which is kept there, and a certain formula is said to be used. The questioner first breathes over the book, and says :—

“ O Hafiz of Shiraz, impart
Foreknowledge to my anxious hea.”

Then with closed eyes the book is opened at random, and the first couplet he sees is read as an answer to his question. At Hafiz's grave are sometimes seen a merry carousing party who look upon Hafiz as their leader, who, Emerson says, “ tears off his turban and throws it at the head of the meddling dervish, and throws his glass after the turban.” Again, penitent pilgrims seek his grave to beseech this Sufi saint to intercede for them. Assuredly he does “ float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either.”²

¹ See page 364.

² Fitzgerald.

Hafiz left no complete volume of his works ; like Shakespeare's, they were collected after his death. There are five hundred and seventy-three ghazels or odes, forty-two aphorisms, seventy-nine quatrains and several kasidas and other forms. The principal themes of his odes are love, wine, and roses,— but these themes all have a secondary interpretation and a moral significance.

Although "not so learned as Sa'di or so scientific as Jami, he is the most natural and least egotistical poet of Persia."¹ "Persian of the Persians."² Eastern critics say of him that he "may be condemned but he cannot be compared."

A PERSIAN SONG.³

SWEET maid, if thou wouldest charm my sight,
And bid those arms my neck enfold,

That rosy cheek, that lily hand,
Would give thy poet more delight
Than all Bokhara's vaunted gold,

Than all the gems of Samarkand.

Boy, let yon liquid ruby⁴ flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,

Whate'er the frowning zealots say ;
Tell them their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Ruknabad,
A bower so sweet as Moscalla.

Oh ! when these fair, perfidious maids,
Whose eyes our secret haunts infest,

¹ *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 26.

² Fitzgerald.

³ Sir William Jones's celebrated translation of the first ode. He is said to have been the first to introduce Hafiz to the West.

⁴ A *melted ruby* is a common expression for wine in Persian poetry.

Their dear destructive charms display,
Each glance my tender breast invades,
And robs my wounded soul of rest,
As Tartars seize their destined prey.

In vain with love our bosoms glow ;
Can all our tears, can all our sighs
New lustre to those charms impart ? —
Can cheeks where living roses blow,
Where Nature spreads her richest dyes,
Require the borrowed gloss of art ?

Speak not of fate — ah ! change the theme,
And talk of odors, talk of wine ;
Talk of the flowers, that round us bloom ;
'Tis all a cloud, 'tis all a dream ;
To love and joy thy thoughts confine,
Nor hope to pierce the sacred gloom.

Beauty has such resistless power,
That e'en the chaste Egyptian dame ¹
Sighed for the blooming Hebrew boy ;
For her how fatal was the hour,
When to the banks of Nilus came
A youth so lovely and so coy ! ²

But ah ! sweet maid, my counsel hear
(Youth should attend when those advise
Whom long experience renders sage) ;

¹ Zulaikha, Potiphar's wife.

² Joseph.

While music charms the ravished ear,
 While sparkling cups delight our eyes,
 Be gay ; and scorn the frowns of age.

What cruel answer have I heard !
 And yet, by heaven, I love thee still :
 Can aught be cruel from thy lip ?
 Yet say, how fell that bitter word
 From lips which streams of sweetness fill,
 Which naught but drops of honey sip ?

Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
 Whose accents flow with artless ease,
 Like Orient pearls at random strung ;
 Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say,
 And oh ! far sweeter, if they please
 The nymph for whom these notes are sung.

ODE I.¹

1. An if yon Turk of Shiraz land this heart would take
 to hold in fee,
 Bokhara town and Samarkand to that black mole
 my dower should be.
2. Ho, Saki, pour the wine-flask dry ; in Eden's
 bowers we ne'er shall find
 Moscalla's rosy bed, nor streams of Ruknabad's de-
 lightsome lea.

¹ Selections from the *Odes of Hafiz* translated by W 'ter Leaf.

3. Alack, these saucy Lulis, dear beguilers that the town embroil,
The wantons tear the heartstrings as the Turks their plunder-banquetry.
4. On our frail love the Loved One's pure perfection no dependence knows ;
Can unguent, powder, paint, and patch embellish faces fair, pardie ?
5. Be wine and minstrel all thy theme ; beware, nor plumb the deeps of fate ;
For none hath found, nor e'er shall find by wit, that great enigma's key.
6. Of that fair favor Joseph wore, to make more fair the day, we know ;
For him love bade Zulaikha tear apart her veil of prudency.
7. Thy words were hard, yet I submit ; forgive thee God ! Thy words were good ;
The tart response beseemeth well the honeyed ruby lips of thee.
8. Give ear, my life ! perpend my words ; for more dear e'en than life itself
To youth, so blest of Fortune, speaks the sage advice of ancientry.
9. The ode is made, the pearls are strung ; go, Hafiz, sweetly sing thy lay ;
With jewels from the Pleiad crown doth Heaven engem thy minstrelsy.

ODE II.

1. All bounds my heart is breaking ; friends, haste to
my salvation !
Woe's me ! My secret hidden cries loud for proclama-tion.
2. Mid reefs my bark is grounded ; blow fair, O breeze
of mercy ;
Mayhap we win the Friend yet, Love's goal of navi-ga-tion.
3. This ten-day smile of heaven swift passes like a tale
told !
Be gracious while thou mayest, brook not procras-tina-tion.
4. That glass of Alexander naught save the bowl of
wine was ;
See all Darius' kingdom spread there in revela-tion.
5. Go to, thou lord of power, do thanks for fortune's
dower,
Seek out the poor unfriended, raise up the lowly
sta-tion.
6. All peace within the two worlds, two words alone
assure it,
“Tow'rd lovers loving-kindness, tow'rd foes dissim-
ulation.”

7. Ringed round with wine and roses, sweet sang the
bulbul yestreen,
“ Bring quick the morning goblet ; friends, watch
in expectation.”
8. All entry men forbid me inside the gate of virtue ;
So, sir, and wilt thou scorn me ? Go, change pre-
destination !
9. More sweet to me than kisses, more soft than maid-
en’s cheeks are,
That bitter named of Sufi, “ Dam of abomination.”
10. When comes the hour of sadness, turn thou to wine
and gladness ;
Karuns of beggars maketh wine’s chemic transmu-
tation.
11. Wine-flecked is Hafiz’ cassock, yet not of choice
he dons it ;
Ah, Shaikh of hem unspotted, hear thou my excul-
pation !

ODE III.

1. Aflame with bloom is the red rose, the bulbul drunk
with spring ;
What ho, adorers of wine ! Hear the call to mirth
that they fling.

2. The cornerstone of repentance that seemed a rock firm-set
Is rent and driven asunder by touch of glasses a-ring.
3. Fill high the bowl with the red wine, for here in Liberty Hall
The sage is one with the toper, the ploughman e'en as the king.
4. From out this Hostel of Two Doors the signal calls us away,
Alike if low be the roof-tree or lofty dome up-spring.
5. We conquer only through anguish the resting-place of delight ;
To life, by bond of Alast-vow, the long Alas must cling.
6. With *is* and *is not* annoy not thy heart ; be merry of soul,
For *is not* is but the last end of every perfect thing.
7. The fame of Asaph, the wind-steed, the speech with the birds of the air
As wind have passed ; to their master no more avail shall they bring.
8. No pinion heavenward soaring desire ; the arrow aloft

Shall sink to dust in the end, howsoe'er it leap on
the wing.

9. What thanks and praises, O Hafiz, shall yield the
tongue of thy pen,
That all the songs of thy singing from mouth to
mouth men sing !

ODE IV.

1. Returns again to the pleasance the rose, alive from
the dead ;
Before her feet in obeisance is bowed the violet's
head.
2. The earth is gemmed as the skies are, the buds a
zodiac band,
For signs in happy ascendant and sweet conjunc-
tion spread.
3. Now kiss the cheek of the Saki to sound of tabor
and pipe,
To voice of viol and harpstring the wine of dawn-
tide wed.
4. The rose's season bereave not of wine and music
and love,
For as the days of a man's life her little week is
fled.
5. The faith of old Zoroaster renews the garden
again,

- For lo, the tulip is kindled with fire of Nimrod red.
6. The earth is even as Eden, this hour of lily and rose ;
This hour, alas ! Not an Eden's eternal dwelling-stead !
7. The rose with Solomon rides, borne aloft on wings of the wind ;
The bulbul's anthem at dawn like the voice of David is shed.
8. Fill high the bowl to our lord's name 'Imad-ud-Din Mahmud ;
Behold King Solomon's Asaph in him incarnated.
9. Beyond eternity's bounds stretch the gracious shade of his might ;
Beneath that shadow, O Hafiz, be thine eternity sped.

ODE V.

1. For the garden longs my heart not, when thy radiance it discerneth ;
As a cypress rooted resteth, as a branded tulip¹ burneth.
2. To the arch of arching eyebrows shall my head no more be put low,

¹ The dark marks at the base of the tulip petals typify the brand marks with which the flames of love sear the heart.

For the hermit-heart of passion to the world no
longer turneth.

3. For the hyacinth, I scorn her, that she dares to
match thy ringlets ;
What a puny worthless black thing, what an impu-
dence she learneth !
4. In the wilderness and dark night whither turn the
erring footstep,
But to where thy beauty radiant as a beacon brightly
burneth ?
5. With the taper meetly weep I in the dreary hour of
dawntide.
For alike we sit consuming, and alike the Loved
One spurneth.
6. In the garden walk and mark how, by the rose's
throne, the tulip
As a monarch's boon companion his effulgent cup
upturneth.
7. As the cloud of April weep I to behold that in the
pleasance
'Tis the nightingale that nesteth, but a crow the
glory earneth.
8. With thy eye for torch, thy love-lock in the night
my heart doth waylay —
The marauder bold, that such light on his thieving
naught concerneth !
9. The enduring heart of Hafiz but the lore of love
desireth,

Hath abjured the thought of splendor, for the
garden never yearneth.

ODE VI.

1. Send the criers round the market, call the royst'lers'
band to hear,
Crying, "O yes ! All ye good folk through the
Loved One's realm, give ear.
2. "Lost, a handmaid ! Strayed awhile since ! Lost,
the Vine's wild daughter, lost !
Raise the hue and cry to seize her ! Danger lurks
where she is near.
3. "Round her head she wears a foam-crown ; all her
garb glows ruby-hued ;
Thief of wits is she ; detain her, lest ye dare not
sleep for fear.
4. "Whoso brings me back the tart maid, take for
sweetmeat all my soul !
Though the deepest hell conceal her, go ye down,
go hale her here.
5. "She's a wastrel, she's a wanton, shame abandoned,
rosy-red ;
If ye find her, send her back to Hafiz, Balladier."

ODE VII.

1. Come back, my Saki, come ; for of love-service
fain am I,
Fate's suppliant, athirst to be bowed neath the chain
am I.

2. Where through the radiant east of the wine-bowl
thy glory dawns,
Rise, light my path ; bewildered in life's mazes
vain am I.
3. What though the surge of sin be about me to whelm
me o'er ?
Love's hand shall bear me up ; his elect, purged of
stain, am I.
4. Flout not the toper's call nor his ill name, O man
of law ;
What thing soe'er the counsels of God foreordain
am I.
5. Drink wine ; nor wealth nor will shall avail man the
gift of love ;
Heir since creation's dawn to the one golden gain
am I.
6. What though afar I dwell in the flesh, far from
peace and thee ;
Nathless in heart and soul in thy court mid the
train am I.
7. I who from land and home never yet wandered
forth abroad,
Fain, but to see thy face, of the wild wave and plain
am I.
8. Stand hills and seas between us ; arise, Angel Guard,
to aid ;
Guide thou my steps ; a weakling aghast, racked of
pain, am I.

9. West Wind, if ever thou breathe of my love's ring-
let musky sweet,
West Wind, beware, for jealousy's right hand insane
am I.
10. Hafiz beneath thy footsteps is yearning to yield
his soul ;
While life abides, the thrall of my heart's suzerain
am I.

ODE VIII.

1. When as my wailing is heard mid the stranger's
evening prayer,
With strange lamenting in strange ears the tale of
woe I declare.
2. At thought of home and of loved ones so loud I
raise my complaint,
The tide of brine overwhelms all the ways wherein
men fare.
3. My friends' abode shall be mine, not the strangers'
outland realm ;
Oh, set me back, my Protector, amid my comrades
there.
4. My Guide, for love of the Lord, help and lead, that
yet once more
Along the street of the wine-house aloft my banner
I bear.

5. 'Tis not for reason to count up my years, and write
 me old,
For like a child with a child, so I sport in love with
 my fair.
6. The winds of west and of north know my heart,
 none other beyond ;
For who, save only the wind, comes my way, my
 secret to share ?
7. The breathing air of my love's home to me is water
 of life ;
Arise and waft me, O West Wind, the dust of Shiraz'
 air.
8. My falling tear hath bewrayed me ; yet how to lay
 my plaint ?
Mine own familiar friend 'tis hath laid my secret
 bare.
9. Methought I heard in the dawntide the lute of
 Zuhra sing,
“ My skill was taught me of Hafiz, the sweet beyond
 compare.”

ODE IX.

1. Say, where is rapture's vision ? Eyes on the Loved
 One bending,
More high than kingly splendor, Love's fane as
 beadsman tending.

2. Light 'twere, desire to sever forth from the soul, but
nathless
Soul friends depart asunder — there, there the pain
transcending !
3. Fain in the garden budlike close-wrapped were I,
thereafter
Frail reputation's vestment bloomlike asunder
rending ;
4. Now like the zephyr breathing love tales in roses'
hearing,
Now from the yearning bulbul love's myst'ry apprehending.
5. While yet the hand availeth, sweet lips to kiss delay
not ;
Else lip and hand thou bitest too late, when comes
the ending.
6. Waste not the hour of friendship ; outside this
House of Two Doors
Friends soon shall part asunder, no more together
wending.
7. Clean out of mind of Sultan Mansur hath Hafiz
wandered ;
Lord, bring him back the olden kind heart, the
poor befriending.

ODE 'X.

1. Curled is the hair of hyacinth, jealous to match thy
hair, for thee ;

If but thy lips do sweetly smile, rose doth her vesture tear for thee.

2. Pierce not thy faithful bulbul's heart, rose of the fragrant breath, my rose ;

Hark how I make through all the night, all in the night, my prayer for thee.

3. I that of old was sick to hear even the sound of angel voice,

Now the insensate wordly jeer, chatter, and babble, bear for thee.

4. Worship of thee hath sealed my brow, dust of thy door my Eden now,

Love of thy cheek my life, I trow, all my desire is care for thee.

5. Cowl of the monk and bowl of wine, how shall the twain by man be wed?

Yet for the love I bear to thee, these to unite I dare for thee.

6. Lo, in the beadsman's tattered sleeve hidden is wealth beyond a king's ;

Soon shall he climb the throne, who dares beadsman's attire to wear for thee.

7. Now is mine eye a kindly seat ; there is thy picture's resting-place ;

Yea ; 'tis a seat of prayer, my king ; be it not empty e'er for thee.

8. Like to a garden bower thy cheek, where is the
beauty-tide of spring
Hafiz the sweet of tongue doth nest, trilling his
music there for thee.

ODE XI.

1. Man of Self, lifted up with endless pride,
We forgive thee — for love to thee is denied.
2. Hover not round the raving lovers' laments ;
Take thy “ Reason Supreme ” for goal and guide !
3. What of Love's drunken frenzy knows that brain
That the grape's earthly juice alone hath plied ?
4. Get a Moon-love, and teach thy heart to strive,
Though thy flame, like a sun, be spread world-wide.
5. 'Tis the white face, the anguish-burdened sigh,
Tell the secrets the heart of love would hide.
6. Let the bowl clear the fumes that rack thy brain ;
Hafiz, drink deep, and name and fame be defied.

ODE XII.

1. “ What bounty shall Heaven bestow? Drink wine ;
be the rose-leaf sprent.”
So rose in the dawntide sang ; sing, bulbul, a glad
consent.

2. Bear forth to the lawn our throne ; there, Saki
and loved one by,
Press lips upon lips and cheek, quaff wine and the
rose-bower scent.
3. Whose heart do the rosebud lips make glad with a
laugh this day?
Why quit me, O rosebuds pray? Whereto are thy
footsteps bent?
4. Pace hither, O myrtle form ; give thought to the
roses' realm ;
Come forth that the cypress' pride take lessons in
blandishment.
5. This day is the mart filled full ; thronged buyers
about thee press ;
Why tarry to take thy gain, full lightly in life's road
spent?
6. All bare to the wayward winds burns beauty, as
tapers burn ;
Put forth to the use thy stock, take profit of
goods well lent.
7. That ringlet, a hundredfold more sweet than the
Tartar's musk,
Well 'twere, did the perfume breathe yet sweeter for
kind intent.
8. Each bird with a song came down, made melody
round our King ;
Bulbul with a ballad came, Hafiz with a prayer
content.

ODE XIII.

1. Seize the hour, for time flies fast ; seize the hour
for yet ye may ;
Take the boon of life, my soul ; take it now, for yet
'tis day.
2. Strive to live ; from Fortune's hand win the gift so
hard bestowed ;
High the cost of Heaven's grace ; life the price we
needs must pay.
3. Hear the counsel lovers give ; enter in the gates of
joy ;
Shall the care of this doomed world all the joy of
love outweigh ?
4. Thou that hast the garden's charge, when from out
the world I pass,
Save that lovely cypress-form, plant no cypress o'er
my clay.
5. Comes the sour ascetic nigh, hush, no word of top-
ing speak ;
Save the leech the secret knows, shall we all the
pain display ?
6. As thou walk'st along thy path, blood galore thy
eyelash spills ;
Hasty steps may some day fall ; fear to stumble,
heed thy way !

7. 'Twas the grace of One Name erst dow'red with
 might Suliman's seal ;
In that Name, O honey-sweet, all the night for
 thee we pray.
8. Torn away my Joseph dear ; mercy, mercy, breth-
 ren mine ;
All the woe of Canaan's sire once again my woes
 portray.
9. Strayed is Hafiz ; ah, be kind ; gently lead the lost
 one back ;
In thy straying ringlet's curl make a home for
 hearts astray.

ODE XIV.

MY BIRD.¹

My soul is as a sacred bird, the Highest Heaven its
 nest :

Fretting within the body's bars, it finds on earth no
 rest.

When speeding from this dusty heap, this bird of mine
 shall soar,

'Twill find upon yon lofty gate the nest it had before.

The Sidrah² shall receive my bird when it has winged
 its way :

Know on the Empyrean's top my falcon's foot shall
 stay.

¹ Translations by Herman Bicknell.

² "The Sidrah" — the tree of Paradise.

Over the ample field of earth is Fortune's shadow cast,
Where, upon wings and pennons borne, this bird of
mine has passed.

No spot in the two worlds it owns — above the sphere
its goal :

Its body from the quarry is, from No-place is its soul.

'Tis only in the Glorious World my bird its splendor
shows ;

The rosy bower of Paradise its daily food bestows.

Mad Hafiz, while the Unity
Thou thus proclaim'st in brief,
Draw thou thy unifying pen
Through men and genii's leaf.¹

ODE XVII.

That day of friendship when we met — Recall ;
Recall those days of fond regret,

Recall.

As bitter poison grief my palate sours :
The sound : “ Be it sweet ! ”² at feasts of ours
Recall.

My friends, it may be, have forgotten long ;
But I a thousand times that throng

Recall ;

¹ Recognize no existence excepting that of God. Regarding men and genii as a leaf, or two pages, erase them both. Sudi doubts if Hafiz composed this ode.

² “ Be it sweet ! ” an expression used at drinking parties.

ODES XV. AND XVI.¹

When to my grave comes soft like
 Heavy silk,
 Who reads the Way be thou.
 Hereafter join the pilgrim band, and one
 the Shah to pay:
 Therefor let thy practice be devotion; o
 World for the drinkers the pilgrimage shall be.

O THOU WHO ABIDEST although ALL THINGS PERISH!

Where doth Thy love's glad message echo for my
rapt soul to rise?
This sacred bird from the world's meshes yearns to
its goal to rise.

I swear, wilt Thou Thy servant name me, by all my
love sublime,
Higher than my desire of lordship o'er space and
time to rise.

Vouchsafe, Lord, from Thy cloud of guidance to
pour on me Thy rain,
Ere Thou command me as an atom from man's
domain to rise.

Bring minstrels and the wine-cup with thee, or at my
tomb ne'er sit;
Permit me in thy perfume dancing from the grave's
pit to rise.

Though I am old, embrace me closely, be it a single
night;
May I, made young by Thy caresses, at morn have
might to rise!

Arouse thee! show thy lofty stature, idol of winning
mien;
Enable me, as soul-reft Hafiz, from Nature's scene to
rise!

To-day am I of life possessed; 'tis wholly all for
thy Love:
At morn by the Imams' pure souls my witness there
above be Thou!

The sepulchre where Riza rests, the
eighth Imam, Faith's Sultan great,
Profoundly with thy soul salute; and
gladly at its gate be thou.

O man, who art not Ali's friend, thou
hast religion's truth denied;
Whether the Zealot of the age, or on
the Path the guide be thou.

On spiritual men the lamp of Hafiz gleamed.
 Thrice take thou from MOSCALLA'S EARTH
 ITS RICHEST GRAIN.

INSCRIPTION ON THE SLAB OF HAFIZ'S TOMB.

¹ Odes inscribed on Hafiz's tomb.

And now while fettered by misfortune's chain,
All those who grateful sought my gain

Recall.

Though thousand rivers from my eyes descend,
I Zindarud, where gard'ners tend,¹

Recall ;

And crushed by sorrow that finds no relief,
Those who brought solace to my grief

Recall.

No more from Hafiz' lips shall pass
Those who once kept them, I, alas !

Recall.

ODE XVIII.

Plant thou the tree of friendship only; so shall thy
heart's desire bear fruit :
Uproot thou hatred's plant completely, or woes un-
numbered thence may shoot.

Gray-headed Hafiz in this garden
Prays God that still his lot may be
To sit upon a brooklet's margin,
And there caress some Cypress-tree.

ODE XIX.

Far better, in a king, one hour in deeds of justice
passed,
Than piety and works austere that five-score years
should last.

¹ Zindarud is the river at Ispahan, which is still famed for its pleasant gardens and palaces.

ODE XX.¹

If that dear musk-moled Fair undraped draw near,
 That Moon who mid all beauties finds no peer,
 Her heart is seen through her transparent breast
 As pebbles glitter under water clear.

ODE XXI.²

I said, "O Queen of loveliness,
 Have mercy on a wretch like me!"
 She answered, "Love has brought distress
 To many a wretch like thee!"

I said, "Ah, stay! and list awhile—"
 She lightly answered, "Pardon me,
 The Queen of Love has not one smile
 For such a wretch as thee!"

"The bright-eyed one who lays her head
 To sleep on silk—indifferent she,
 Though thorns and brambles be the bed
 Of such a wretch as thee!"

Ah! what a shrine for love has he
 Whose heart is fettered in thy hair!
 Ah, Mole! how blest to dwell like thee!
 Upon that face so fair!

Among the lilies of her cheek,
 The transient blushes come and go;
 A wind-tossed rose-leaf thus might streak
 The jasmine's breast of snow!

¹ Tetrastich.² *Calcutta Review* of 1871.

I said, "The lover's resting-place
Is in the black night of your hair ;"
She turned on me her laughing face
And smiled at my despair.

"Ah, Moon of mine ! " I spake again,
" Hide not that rosy cheek from me,
Nor plunge my spirit cleft with pain
In utter misery ! "

ODE XXII.¹

I have felt love's fatal pain
Such — I cannot tell again
Absence poisons every bliss
Such as — ask not what it is.

I have roamed the world around,
And at last a treasure found,
One without a blight or blame,
One whom — ask me not to name.

Oh ! her feet my tears bedew,
Fast they fall, nor sweet nor few
Oh ! my tears impetuous flow
So as — seek not how to know.

Yester night, from her I heard
Many a pleasing honeyed word,
Words of rapture, but I pray —
Ask me, ask me not to say.

¹ Translated from Hafiz by the eighteen years old Derozio, *Calcutta Review*, September 2, 1827.

Wherefore bite my lip? Oh! say
 Did my tongue my heart betray?
 Ruby lips I've pressed, 'tis true,
 Whose,— I will not tell to you.

Far from her in my lone cot
 Sad has been my hapless lot;
 I have felt, alas! too well
 Pangs which ask me not to tell.

I the ways of Love have known,
 All its secrets are my own,—
 Shall I all those secrets state?
 They're what— I can ne'er relate.

ODE XXIII.¹

A flower-tinted cheek, the flowery close
 Of the fair earth, these are enough for me—
 Enough that in the meadow wanes and grows
 The shadow of a graceful cypress tree.
 I am no lover of hypocrisy;
 Of all the treasures that the earth can boast,
 A brimming cup of wine I prize the most—
This is enough for me!

To them that here renowned for virtue live,
 A heavenly palace is the meet reward;
 To me, the drunkard and the beggar, give
 The temple of the grape with red wine stored!
 Beside a river seat thee on the sward;

¹ Poems from the *Divan* of Hafiz, translated by Gertrude Lowthian Bell.

It floweth past — so flows thy life away,
So sweetly, swiftly, fleets our little day —
Swift, but enough for me !

Look upon all the gold in the world's mart,
On all the tears the world hath shed in vain ;
Shall they not satisfy thy craving heart ?
I have enough of loss, enough of gain ;
I have my Love, what more can I obtain ?
Mine is the joy of her companionship
Whose healing lip is laid upon my lip —
This is enough for me !

I pray thee send not forth my naked soul
From its poor house to seek for Paradise ;
Though heaven and earth before me God unroll,
Back to my village still my spirit flies,
And, Hafiz, at the door of Kismet lies
No just complaint — a mind like water clear,
A song that swells and dies upon the ear,
These are enough for thee !

ODE XXIV.

Sleep on thine eyes, bright as narcissus flowers,
Falls not in vain !
And not in vain thy hair's soft radiance showers —
Ah, not in vain !

Before the milk upon thy lips was dry,
I said : “ Lips where the salt of wit doth lie,

Sweets shall be mingled with thy mockery,
And not in vain ! ”

Thy mouth the fountain where Life’s waters flow,
A dimpled well of tears is set below,
And death lies near to life thy lovers know,
But know in vain !

God send to thee great length of happy days !
Lo, not for his own life thy servant prays ;
Love’s dart in thy bent brows the Archer lays,
Nor shoots in vain.

Art thou with grief afflicted, with the smart
Of absence, and is bitter toil thy part ?
Thy lamentations and thy tears, oh Heart,
Are not in vain !

Last night the wind from out her village blew,
And wandered all the garden alleys through,
Oh rose, tearing thy bosom’s robe in two ;
’Twas not in vain !

And Hafiz, though thy heart within thee dies,
Hiding love’s agony from curious eyes,
Ah, not in vain thy tears, not vain thy sighs,
Not all in vain !

ODE XXV.

Oh Cup-bearer, set my glass afire
With the light of wine ! oh minstrel, sing :
The word fulfilleth my heart’s desire !

Reflected within the goblet's ring
I see the glow of my Love's red cheek,
And scant of wit, ye who fail to seek
The pleasures that wine alone can bring !

Let not the blandishments be checked
That slender beauties lavish on me,
Until in the grace of the cypress decked,
My love shall come like a ruddy pine tree.
He cannot perish whose heart doth hold
The life love wreathes — though my days are told,
In the Book of the World lives my constancy.

But when the Day of Reckoning is here,
I fancy little will be the gain
That accrues to the Shaikh for his lawful cheer,
Or to me for the draught forbidden I drain.
The drunken eyes of my comrades shine,
And I too, stretching my hand to the wine,
On the neck of drunkenness loosen the rein.

Oh wind, if thou passest the garden close
Of my heart's dear master, carry for me
The message I send to him, wind that blows !
“ Why hast thou thrust from thy memory
My hapless name ? ” breathe low in his ear ;
“ Knowest thou not that the day is near
When nor thou nor any shall think on me ? ”

If with tears, oh Hafiz, thine eyes are wet,
Scatter them round thee like grain, and snare
The Bird of Joy when it comes to thy net.

As the tulip shrinks from the cold night air,
 So shrank my heart and quailed in the shade ;
 Oh Song-bird Fortune, the toils are laid,
 When shall thy bright wings lie pinioned there ?

The heavens' green sea and the bark therein,
 The slender bark of the crescent moon,
 Are lost in thy bounty's radiant noon,
 Vizir and pilgrim, Kawameddin !

ODE XXVI.¹

The nightingale with drops of his heart's blood
 Had nourished the red rose, then came a wind,
 And catching at the boughs in envious mood,
 A hundred thorns about his heart entwined.
 Like to the parrot crunching sugar, good
 Seemed the world to me who could not stay
 The wind of Death that swept my hopes away.

Light of mine eyes and harvest of my heart,
 And mine at least in changeless memory !
 Ah, when he found it easy to depart,
 He left the harder pilgrimage to me !
 Oh Camel-driver, though the cordage start,
 For God's sake help me lift my fallen load,
 And Pity be my comrade of the road !

My face is seamed with dust, mine eyes are wet.
 Of dust and tears the turkois firmament

¹ Written on his son's death.

Kneadeth the bricks for joy's abode ; and yet . . .
Alas, and weeping yet I make lament !
Because the moon her jealous glances set
Upon the bow-bent eyebrows of my moon,
He sought a lodging in the grave — too soon !

I had not castled, and the time is gone.
What shall I play ? Upon the checkered floor
Of Night and Day, Death won the game — forlorn
And careless now, Hafiz can lose no more.

ODE XXVII.

Return ! that to a heart wounded full sore
Valiance and strength may enter in ; return !
And Life shall pause at the deserted door,
The cold dead body breathe again and burn.
Oh come ! and touch mine eyes, of thy sweet grace,
For I am blind to all but to thy face.
Open the gates and bid me see once more !

Like to a cruel Ethiopian band,
Sorrow despoiled the kingdom of my heart —
Return ! glad Lord of Rome, and free the land ;
Before thine arms the foe shall break and part.
See now, I hold a mirror to mine eyes,
And naught but thy reflection therein lies ;
The glass speaks truth to them that understand.

Night is with child, hast thou not heard men say ?
“Night is with child ! what will she bring to birth ?”

I sit and ask the tears when thou'rt away.
 Oh come ! and when the nightingale of mirth
 Pipes in the Spring-awakened garden ground,
 In Hafiz' heart shall ring a sweeter sound,
 Diviner nightingales attune their lay.

ODE XXVIII.

What is wrought in the forge of the living and life—
 All things are naught ! Ho ! fill me the bowl,
 For naught is the gear of the world and the strife !
 One passion has quickened the heart and the soul,
 The Beloved's presence alone they have sought—
 Love at least exists ; yet if Love were not,
 Heart and soul would sink to the common lot —

All things are naught !

Like an empty cup is the fate of each,
 That each must fill from Life's mighty flood ;
 Naught thy toil, though to Paradise gate thou reach,
 If Another has filled up thy cup with blood ;
 Neither shade from the sweet-fruited trees could be
 bought

By thy praying — oh Cypress of Truth, dost not see
 That Sidrah and Tuba were naught, and to thee

All then were naught !

The span of thy life is as five little days,
 Brief hours and swift in this halting-place ;
 Rest softly, ah rest ! while the Shadow delays,
 For Time's self is naught and the dial's face.

What though I, too, have tasted the salt of my tears,
Though I, too, have burnt in the fires of grief,
Shall I cry aloud to unheeding ears ?
Mourn and be silent ! naught brings relief.
Thou, Hafiz, art praised for the songs thou hast
wrought,
But bearing a stained or an honored name,
The lovers of wine shall make light of thy fame —
All things are naught !

Ode XXIX.

Slaves of thy shining eyes are even those
That diadems of might and empire bear ;
Drunk with the wine that from thy red lip flows,
Are they that e'en the grape's delight forswear.
Drift, like the wind, across a violet bed,

Before thy many lovers, weeping low,
And clad like violets in blue robes of woe,
Who feel thy wind-blown hair and bow the head.

Thy messenger the breath of dawn, and mine
A stream of tears, since lover and beloved
Keep not their secret ; through my verses shine,
Though other lays my flower's grace have proved
And countless nightingales have sung thy praise.
When veiled beneath thy curls thou passest, see,
To right and leftward those that welcome thee
Have bartered peace and rest on thee to gaze !

But thou that knowest God by heart, away !
Wine-drunk, love-drunk, we inherit Paradise,
His mercy is for sinners ; hence and pray
Where wine thy cheek red as red erghwan dyes,
And leave the cell to faces sinister.
Oh Khizr, whose happy feet bathed in life's fount,
Help one who toils afoot — the horsemen mount
And hasten on their way ; I scarce can stir.

Ah, loose me not ! ah, set not Hafiz free
From out the bondage of thy gleaming hair !
Safe only those, safe, and at liberty,
That fast enchain'd in thy linked ringlets are.
But from the image of his dusty cheek
Learn this from Hafiz : proudest heads shall bend,
And dwellers on the threshold of a friend
Be crownèd with the dust that crowns the meek.

ODE XXX.

Not all the sum of earthly happiness
Is worth the bowed head of a moment's pain,
And if I sell for wine my dervish dress,
Worth more than what I sell is what I gain !
Land where my Lady dwells, thou holdest me
Enchained ; else Fars were but a barren soil,
Not worth the journey over land and sea,

Not worth the toil !

Down in the quarter where they sell red wine,
My holy carpet scarce would fetch a cup —
How brave a pledge of piety is mine,
Which is not worth a goblet foaming up !
Mine enemy heaped scorn on me and said :
“ Forth from the tavern gate ! ” Why am I thrust
From off the threshold ? is my fallen head
Not worth the dust ?

Wash white that travel-stained sad robe of thine !
Where word and deed alike one color bear,
The grape's fair purple garment shall outshine
Thy many-colored rags and tattered gear.
Full easy seemed the sorrow of the sea
Lightened by hope of gain — hope flew too fast !
A hundred pearls were poor indemnity,
Not worth the blast.

The Sultan's crown, with priceless jewels set,
Encircles fear of death and constant dread ;

It is a head-dress much desired — and yet
 Art sure 'tis worth the danger to the head?
 'Twere best for thee to hide thy face from those
 That long for thee ; the Conqueror's reward
 Is never worth the army's long-drawn woes,
 Worth fire and sword.

Ah, seek the treasure of a mind at rest
 And store it in the treasury of Ease ;
 Not worth a loyal heart, a tranquil breast,
 Were all the riches of thy lands and seas !
 Ah, scorn, like Hafiz, the delights of earth,
 Ask not one grain of favor from the base,
 Two hundred sacks of jewels were not worth
 Thy soul's disgrace !

ODE XXXI.¹

My lady, that did change this house of mine
 Into a heaven when that she dwelt therein,
 From head to foot an angel's grace divine
 Enwrapped her ; pure she was, spotless of sin ;
 Fair as the moon her countenance, and wise ;
 Lords of the kind and tender glance, her eyes
 With an abounding loveliness did shine.

Then said my heart : Here will I take my rest !
 This city breathes her love in every part.
 But to a distant bourne was she addressed,
 Alas ! he knew it not, alas, poor heart !
 The influence of some cold malignant star

¹ Said to have been written on the death of his wife.

Has loosed my hand that held her, lone and far
She journeyeth that lay upon my breast.

Not only did she lift my bosom's veil,
Reveal its inmost secret, but her grace
Drew back the curtain from Heaven's mansions pale,
And gave her there an eternal dwelling-place.
The flower-strewn river lip and meadows fair,
The rose herself but fleeting treasures were,
Regret and Winter follow in their trail.

Dear were the days which perished with my friend —
Ah, what is left of life, now she is dead,
All wisdomless and profitless I spend !
The nightingale his own life's blood doth shed,
When, to the kisses of the wind, the morn
Unveils the rose's splendor — with his torn
And jealous breast he dyes her petals red.

Yet pardon her, oh Heart, for poor wert thou,
A humble dervish on the dusty way ;
Crowned with the crown of empire was her brow,
And in the realms of beauty she bore sway.
But all the joy that Hafiz' hand might hold,
Lay in the beads that morn and eve he told,
Worn with God's praise ; and see ! he holds it now.

ODE XXXII.

Not one is filled with madness like to mine
In all the taverns ! my soiled robe lies here,
There my neglected book, both pledged for wine.

With dust my heart is thick, that should be clear,
 A glass to mirror forth the Great King's face ;
 One ray of light from out Thy dwelling-place
 To pierce my night, oh God ! and draw me near.

From out mine eyes unto thy garment's hem
 A river flows ; perchance my cypress tree
 Beside that stream may rear her lofty stem,
 Watering her roots with tears. Ah, bring to me
 The wine vessel ! since my Love's cheek is hid,
 A flood of grief comes from my heart unbid,
 And turns mine eyes into a bitter sea !

Nay, by the hand that sells me wine, I vow
 No more the brimming cup shall touch my lips,
 Until my mistress with her radiant brow
 Adorns my feast — until Love's secret slips
 From her, as from the candle's tongue of flame,
 Though I, the singèd moth, for very shame,
 Dare not extol Love's light without eclipse.

Red wine I worship, and I worship her !—
 Speak not to me of anything beside,
 For naught but these on earth or heaven I care.
 What though the proud narcissus flowers defied
 Thy shining eyes to prove themselves more bright,
 Yet heed them not ! those that are clear of sight
 Follow not them to whom all light's denied.

Before the tavern door a Christian sang
 To sound of pipe and drum, what time the earth

Awaited the white dawn, and gayly rang
Upon mine ear those harbingers of mirth :
“ If the True Faith be such as thou dost say,
Alas ! my Hafiz, that this sweet To-day
Should bring unknown To-morrow to the birth ! ”

ODE XXXIII.

Hast thou forgotten when thy stolen glance
Was turned to me, when on my happy face
Clearly thy love was writ, which doth enhance
All happiness? or when my sore disgrace
(Hast thou forgot?) drew from thine eyes reproof,
And made thee hold thy sweet red lips aloof,
Dowered, like Jesus' breath, with healing grace?¹

Hast thou forgotten how the glorious
Swift nights flew past, the cup of dawn brimmed high?
My love and I alone, God favoring us !
And when she like a waning moon did lie,
And Sleep had drawn his coif about her brow,
Hast thou forgot? Heaven's crescent moon would bow
The head, and in her service pace the sky !

Hast thou forgotten, when a sojourner
Within the tavern gates and drunk with wine,
I found Love's passionate wisdom hidden there,
Which in the mosque none even now divine?
The goblet's carbuncle (hast thou forgot?)

¹ According to Oriental belief, Jesus Christ's gift of healing was due to a miraculous quality in His breath.

Laughed out aloud, and speech flew hot
And fast between thy ruby lips and mine !

Hast thou forgotten when thy cheek's dear torch
Lighted the beacon of desire in me,
And when my heart, like foolish moths that scorch
Their wings and yet return, turned all to thee ?
Within the banquet-hall of Good Repute
(Hast thou forgot?) the wine's self pressed my suit,
And filled the morn with drunken jollity !

Hast thou forgotten when thou laid'st aright
The uncut gems of Hafiz' inmost thought,
And side by side thy sweet care strung the bright
Array of verse on verse — hast thou forgot?

ODE XXXIV.

The breath of Dawn's musk-strewing wind shall blow,
The ancient world shall turn to youth again,
And other wines from out Spring's chalice flow ;
Wine-red, the judas tree shall set before
The pure white jessamine a brimming cup,
And wind-flowers lift their scarlet chalice up
For the star-pale narcissus to adore.

The long-drawn tyranny of grief shall pass,
Parting shall end in meeting, the lament
Of the sad bird that sang “ Alas, alas ! ”
Shall reach the rose in her red-curtained tent.
Forth from the mosque ! the tavern calls to me !

Wouldst hinder us? The preacher's homily
Is long, but life will soon be spent !

Ah, foolish Heart ! the pleasures of To-day,
If thou abandon, will To-morrow stand
Thy surety for the gold thou'st thrown away ?
In Sha'aban the troops of Grief disband,
And crown the hours with wine's red coronet —
The sun of merriment ere long will set,
And meagre Ramazan is close at hand !

Dear is the rose — now, now her sweets proclaim,
While yet the purple petals blush and blow :
Hither adown the path of Spring she came,
And by the path of Autumn she will go.
Now, while we listen, Minstrel, tune thy lay !
Thyself hast said : "The Present steals away ;
The Future comes, and bringing — what ? Dost
know ? "

Summoned by thy melody did Hafiz rise
Out of the darkness near thy lips to dwell ;
Back to the dark again his pathway lies —
Sing out, sing clear, and singing cry : Farewell !

ODE XXXV.

Last night I dreamed that angels stood without
The tavern door, and knocked in vain, and wept ;
They took the clay of Adam, and, methought,
Moulded a cup therewith while all men slept.

Oh dwellers in the halls of Chastity !
 You brought Love's passionate red wine to me,
 Down to the dust I am, your bright feet stepped.

For Heaven's self was all too weak to bear
 The burden of His love God laid on it,
 He turned to seek a messenger elsewhere,
 And in the Book of Fate my name was writ.
 Between my Lord and me such concord lies
 As makes the Houris glad in Paradise,
 With songs of praise through the green glades they flit.

A hundred dreams of Fancy's garnered store
 Assail me — Father Adam went astray
 Tempted by one poor grain of corn ! Wherefore
 Absolve and pardon him that turns away
 Though the soft breath of Truth reaches his ears,
 For two-and-seventy jangling creeds he hears,
 And loud-voiced Fable calls him ceaselessly.

That, that is not the flame of Love's true fire
 Which makes the torchlight shadows dance in rings,
 But where the radiance draws the moth's desire
 And sends him forth with scorched and drooping wings.

ODE XXXVI.

I cease not from desire till my desire
 Is satisfied ; or let my mouth attain
 My love's red mouth, or let my soul expire,
 Sighed from those lips that sought her lips in vain.
 Others may find another love as fair ;

Upon her threshold I have laid my head,
The dust shall cover me, still lying there,
When from my body life and love have fled.

My soul is on my lips ready to fly,
But grief beats in my heart and will not cease,
Because not once, not once before I die,
Will her sweet lips give all my longing peace.
My breath is narrowed down to one long sigh
For a red mouth that burns my thoughts like fire ;
When will that mouth draw near and make reply
To one whose life is straitened with desire ?

When I am dead, open my grave and see
The cloud of smoke that rises round thy feet :
In my dead heart the fire still burns for thee ;
Yea, the smoke rises from my winding-sheet !
Ah, come, Beloved ! for the meadows wait
Thy coming, and the thorn bears flowers instead
Of thorns, the cypress fruit, and desolate
Bare winter from before thy steps has fled.

Hoping within some garden ground to find
A red rose soft and sweet as thy soft cheek,
Through every meadow blows the western wind,
Through every garden he is fain to seek.
Reveal thy face ! that the whole world may be
Bewildered by thy radiant loveliness ;
The cry of man and woman comes to thee,
Open thy lips and comfort their distress !

Each curling lock of thy luxuriant hair
 Breaks into barbed hooks to catch my heart,
 My broken heart is wounded everywhere
 With countless wounds from which the red drops start.
 Yet when sad lovers meet and tell their sighs,
 Not without praise shall Hafiz' name be said,
 Not without tears, in those pale companies
 Where joy has been forgot and hope has fled.

ODE XXXVII.

Cypress and Tulip and sweet Eglantine,
 Of these the tale from lip to lip is sent ;
 Washed by three cups, oh Saki, of thy wine,
 My song shall turn upon this argument.
 Spring, bride of all the meadows, rises up,
 Clothed in her ripest beauty : fill the cup !
 Of Spring's handmaidens runs this song of mine.

The sugar-loving birds of distant Ind,
 Except a Persian sweetmeat that was brought
 To fair Bengal, have found naught to their mind.
 See how my song, that in one night was wrought,
 Defies the limits set by space and time !
 O'er plains and mountain-tops my fearless rhyme,
 Child of a night, its year-long road shall find.

And thou whose sense is dimmed with piety,
 Thou too shalt learn the magic of her eyes ;
 Forth comes the caravan of sorcery
 When from those gates the blue-veined curtains rise.

And when she walks the flowery meadows through,
Upon the jasmine's shamed cheek the dew
Gathers like sweat, she is so fair to see !

Ah, swerve not from the path of righteousness
Though the world lure thee ! like a wrinkled crone,
Hiding beneath her robe lasciviousness,
She plunders them that pause and heed her moan.
From Sinai Moses brings thee wealth untold ;
Bow not thine head before the calf of gold
Like Samir, following after wickedness.

From the Shah's garden blows the wind of Spring,
The tulip in her lifted chalice bears
A dewy wine of Heaven's minist'ring ;
Until Ghiyasuddin, the Sultan, hears,
Sing, Hafiz, of thy longing for his face.
The breezes whispering round thy dwelling-place
Shall carry thy lament unto the King.

JAMI.

THE glory of Persian poetry ends with the great mystic Nur ud-Din Abd ur-Rahman, better known as Jami. He took his *takhallus*, or poetical name, which means "drinking cup" or goblet, from Jam, the province in which he was born in 1414 A.D.

At five years of age he is said to have shown his unusual gifts and he was called Nur-ud-Din, the "Light of Faith." In later years he received the title of Maulana. "Our Master." As a student at Herat and Samarkand he was a wonder to his classmates and an enigma to his professors. The fame of his learning soon travelled to the most remote part of Persia, and as the guest of the Sultan Abu Sa'id, at Herat, he received great honors from the most distinguished men of the times. He became an ardent student of the Sufi doctrine under its great master, Mohammed Saad ud-Din Kashghari. According to Fitzgerald Mohammed appeared to Jami in a dream and thus influenced the poet to study with him. The solitude which the Sufi teaching demands was of so long a duration with Jami that when he again returned to the world he seemed almost to have lost the power of speech. Although early fitted to teach it, it was only during the last years of his life that he would take his master's place at the great mosque at Herat, where his eloquence brought even far-away kings to his feet. Like all True Believers, Jami made his pilgrimage to Mecca. It was in 1472 A.D., when he was about sixty years old. He visited at Baghdad and Damascus, returning after about a year's absence to Herat, where he died at the age of eighty-one years.

Characteristic of the poet was his prayer of: "O God ! Dervish let me live and Dervish die, and in the company

of the Dervish do thou quicken me to life again!" Yet in spite of this sentiment the Sultan Husein had an elaborate funeral for this poet, and he was followed to his grave by a procession of all the celebrities of the court. A noted orator delivered the funeral oration, which was composed by his friend, Mir Ali Shir, the Vizir, who afterward laid the first stone of "Tarbet'i Jami," the monument raised to the poet's memory, and erected in one of the principal streets of Herat.

Jami's wife was the granddaughter of his Sufi teacher, and all his four sons died when very young. For the fourth son he wrote the *Beharistan, or Spring Garden*, an imitation of the eight *Gardens of Paradise*, a superb copy of which lies now in an English library. That Jami "combined the moral tone of Sa'di with the lofty aspiration of Jelalu-'d-Din-Rumi and the graceful ease of Hafiz with the deep pathos of Nizami," is a tribute he evidently feels is not undeserved, as he says of himself, "As Poet, I have resounded through the World: Heaven filled itself with my Song, and the Bride of Time adorned her Ears and Neck with the Pearls of my Verse, whose coming Caravan the Persian Hafiz and Sa'di came forth gladly to salute, and the Indian Khosrau and Hasan hailed as a Wonder of the World."

Jami devoted his life to study and literature, and as a result left behind him, according to one authority,¹ ninety-nine books. These cover a variety of subjects, including theology, biography, ethics, history, letters, and poetry. The treasure spent in decorating the transcriptions of his manuscripts shows how his countrymen estimate his genius. It is said that sixteen artists were employed upon one manuscript containing but 134 pages.²

Jami's *Salaman and Absal* has been translated by Edward Fitzgerald, and was the first Persian poem he ever read. He calls it "almost the best of the Persian

¹ Shir Khan Ludi.

² *Khorasan in Affliction*.

poems I have read or heard about." But among all Jami's celebrated works, *Yusuf and Zulaikha*, remodelled from Firdausi, is unquestionably the most famous and considered the finest poem in the Persian language. It is the sixth title in his exquisite collection of poems called *Haft Aurang* or *The Seven Thrones*. The best Persian scholars know its finest passages by heart, and in India it is read in all the "independent indigenous schools" where Persian is taught; it is really the Persian Ovid. A superb copy of this is in the Oxford Library. The esoteric meaning of the poem was evidently doubted by the writer, who stated that "it seems to have been written for the express purpose of showing how an unprincipled woman may pursue a good man for a series of years, marry him at last almost against his will, and make him wish himself in heaven the next day."

To the Persians Yusuf (Joseph) stands as the emblem of divine perfection, and Zulaikha—the poet's name for Potiphar's wife—shows how the human soul attains the love for the highest beauty and goodness, only when it has suffered and has, like Zulaikha, been purified and regenerated. Such is the deeper meaning of this dramatic love poem which differs in many details from the scriptural story of the young Israelite.

The following translation, ends with the betrothal of Zulaikha and Yusuf. In the original it contains four thousand couplets in which we find the "Marriage" and "Death" of Yusuf, then the death of Zulaikha, and Sir William Jones says it is "the finest poem he ever read."

YUSUF AND ZULAIKHA.¹

PROLOGUE.

UNFOLD, O God, the bud of hope : disclose
From Thine eternal Paradise one rose

¹ Translated by Ralph T. G. Griffith.

Whose breath may flood my brain with odor, while
The bud's leaf-liplets make my garden¹ smile.
O grant that I, in this drear world of woe,
The boundless riches of Thy grace may know.
May gratitude to Thee my thoughts employ ;
To sing Thy praises be my task and joy.

Vouchsafe a prosperous day from those that are
Best on the roll of Wisdom's calendar.
Send forth Thy soldier to the war, and teach
His lips to conquer in the field of speech.
Grant that my tongue may weigh the pearls, O Lord,
Which Thy dear bounty in my heart has stored ;
And let the fragrance Thou hast lent my muse
Its musky breath from Kaf to Kaf² diffuse.
Lips sweet as sugar on my pen bestow,
And from my book let streams of odor flow.

In this world's inn, where sweetest songs abound,
I hear no prelude to the strain I sound.
The guests have quaffed their wine and passed away ;
Their cups were empty and they would not stay.
No sage, no stripling—not a hand ere mine—
Has held this goblet of poetic wine.
Rise, Jami, rise : thy fear behind thee cast,
And, be it clear or dull, bring forth the wine thou hast.

¹ That is, my heart.

² From east to west, from north to south. Kaf is like the Loka-loka of the Hindus, the king of mountains which encircles the flat earth.

PRAISE OF THE PROPHET.

In separation pine the souls of all :
 For pity, Prophet sent by God, we call.
 Art thou not he who pities all, and how
 Canst thou be distant from the wretched now?)
 O dew-sprent Tulip, thou hast drunk thy fill :
 Awake, Narcissus ! wilt thou slumber still?
 Show from the screen of bliss thy head ; display
 That brow that bids the dawn of life be gay.
 Turn thou our night of woe to sun-bright morn,
 And let thy face our glorious day adorn.
 Loose from thy head thy long black hair, to meet
 Like shadows falling at thy cypress'¹ feet.
 Soft skins of Taif² for thy sandals take,
 And of our heartstrings fitting latches make.
 Sages before thee like a carpet lie,
 And fain would kiss thy foot that passes by.
 Leave for the sacred court thy far retreat,
 And tread on lips which yearn to touch those feet.
 Raise up the fathers ; from their misery free,
 And comfort those who give their hearts to thee.
 Though o'er our heads the waves of sin roll high ;
 Though by thy path with thirsty lips we lie ;
 Thou art a cloud of gentle mercy : turn
 Thy pitying look on lips that thirst and burn.
 O blest are they who turn to thee with eyes

¹ Cypress, for a tall, graceful figure in man or woman, is one of the commonplaces of Persian poetry.

² A town not far from Mecca.

Dimmed with thy pathway's dust and strengthened rise.
We sought the mosque thanksgivings to renew ;
Our souls like moths about thy splendor flew.
Each heart a lattice open to the day,
We sported in thy garden and were gay.
On sacred thresholds of thy courts we wept
Tears from the clouds of eyes that never slept.
We swept the dust that on the pavement lay,
And cleared the thistles with our hands away.
Of that, a salve to purge our sight we made ;
Of these, a plaster on our hearts we laid.
Near to the pulpit in thy mosque we drew,
And laid beneath it cheeks like gold in hue ;
Moved from the arch to offer prayer, and wept
With tears of blood where'er thy foot has stepped.
Erect we stood at every pillar's base,
And mid the upright prayed for blissful place.
Our souls yearned for thee : warmed with sweet desire,
We fed each flambeau from our holy fire.
Our souls, thank God, are in that holy spot,
Though with their dust our bodies strew it not.
Helpless are we ; our own wild aims we seek :
O aid the helpless and forgive the weak.
Do thou with loving hand our steps sustain,
Or all our labor, all our strength is vain.
Fate drives us wandering from the path astray :
To God our guide, to God for light we pray.
May His great mercy keep our lives secure,
And in the path of faith our steps assure.
When comes that day that wakes the dead at last,

Let not our honor to the flames be cast.
 Still may He grant, though we have wandered thus,
 Free leave to thee to intercede for us.
 'Tis thine with downward head, as suits the mace,¹
 To urge the ball through intercession's space.
 And through thy aid may Jami's work be found —
 Though some may scorn it — with completion crowned.

BEAUTY.

Void lay the world, in nothingness concealed,
 Without a trace of light or life revealed,
 Save one existence which no second knew —
 Unknown the pleasant words of We and You.
 Then Beauty shone, from stranger glances free,
 Seen of herself, with naught beside to see,
 With garments pure of stain, the fairest flower
 Of virgin loveliness in bridal bower.
 No combing hand had smoothed a flowing tress,
 No mirror shown her eyes their loveliness.
 No surma² dust those cloudless orbs had known,
 To the bright rose her cheek no bulbul flown.
 No heightening hand had decked the rose with green,
 No patch³ or spot upon that cheek was seen.
 No zephyr from her brow had filched a hair, .
 No eye in thought had seen the splendor there.
Her witching snares in solitude she laid,

¹ An allusion to the game of chugan, the modern polo.

² Collyrium or antimony, applied under the eyelid.

³ Small black "beauty spots" were used by Persian, as formerly by English ladies.

And love's sweet game without a partner played.

But when bright Beauty reigns and knows her power,
She springs indignant from her curtained bower.
She scorns seclusion and eludes the guard,
And from the window looks if doors be barred.
See how the tulip on the mountain grown,
Soon as the breath of genial Spring has blown,
Bursts from the rock, impatient to display
Her nascent beauty to the eye of day.

When sudden to thy soul reflection brings
The precious meaning of mysterious things,
Thou canst not drive the thought from out thy brain ;
Speak, hear thou must, for silence is such pain.
So Beauty ne'er will quit the urgent claim
Whose motive first from heavenly beauty came,
When from her blessed bower she fondly strayed,
And to the world and man her charms displayed.

In every mirror then her face was shown,
Her praise in every place was heard and known.
Touched by her light, the hearts of angels burned,
And, like the circling spheres, their heads were turned,
While saintly bands, whom purest motives stir,
Joined in loud praises at the sight of her,
And those who bathe them in the ocean sky
Cried out enraptured, "Laud to God on high ! "

Rays of her splendor lit the rose's breast
And stirred the bulbul's heart with sweet unrest.
From her bright glow its cheek the flambeau fired,
And myriad moths around the flame expired.
Her glory lent the very sun the ray

Which wakes the lotus on the flood to-day.
 Her loveliness made Laili's¹ face look fair
 To Majnun, fettered by her every hair.
 She opened Shirin's sugared lips, and stole
 From Parviz' breast and brave Farhad's the soul.
 Through her his head the Moon of Canaan² raised,
 And fond Zulaikha perished as she gazed.

Yes, though she shrinks from earthly lovers' call,
 Eternal Beauty is the queen of all ;
 In every curtained bower the screen she holds,
 About each captured heart her bonds enfolds.
 Through her sweet love the heart its life retains,
 The soul through love of her its object gains.
 The heart which maidens' gentle witcheries stir
 Is, though unconscious, fired with love of her.
 Refrain from idle speech ; mistake no more :
 She brings her chains and we, her slaves, adore.
 Fair and approved of Love, thou still must own
 That gift of beauty comes from her alone.
 Thou art concealed : she meets all lifted eyes ;
 Thou art the mirror which she beautifies.
 She is that mirror, if we closely view
 The truth — the treasure and the treasury too.

But thou and I — our serious work is naught ;
 We waste our days unmoved by earnest thought.
 Cease, or my task will never end, for her
 Sweet beauties lack a meet interpreter.

¹ Laili and Majnun, and Shirin, Parviz, and Farhad, are typical lovers, celebrated and frequently alluded to in Persian poetry.

² Yusuf.

Then let us still the slaves of love remain,
For without love we live in vain, in vain.

LOVE.

No heart is that which love ne'er wounded : they
Who know not lovers' pangs are soulless clay.
Turn from the world, O turn thy wandering feet ;
Come to the world of love and find it sweet.

Heaven's giddy round from craze of love was caught ;
From love's disputes the world with strife is fraught.
Love's slave be thou if thou would fain be free :
Welcome love's pangs, and happy shalt thou be.
From wine of love came joy and generous heat :
From meaner cups flow sorrow and deceit.
Love's sweet, soft memories youth itself restore :
The tale of love gives fame for evermore.
If Majnun ne'er the cup of love had drained,
High fame in heaven and earth he ne'er had gained.
A thousand sages, deep in wisdom's lore,
Untaught of love, died, and are known no more :
Without a name or trace in death they sank,
And in the book of Time their name is blank.

The groves are gay with many a lovely bird :
Our lips are silent and their praise unheard ;
But when the theme is love's delicious tale,
The moth is lauded and the nightingale.
What though a hundred arts to thee be known :
Freedom from self is gained through love alone.
To worldly love thy youthful thoughts incline,

For earthly love will lead to love divine.]

First with the Alphabet thy task begin,

Then take the Word of God and read therein.

Once to his master a disciple cried : —

“ To wisdom’s pleasant path be thou my guide.”

“ Hast thou ne’er loved ? ” the master answered ; “ learn
The ways of love and then to me return.”

Drink deep of earthly love, that so thy lip
May learn the wine of holier love to sip.

But let not form too long thy soul entrance ;
Pass o’er the bridge : with rapid feet advance.

If thou wouldst rest, thine ordered journey sped,
Forbear to linger at the bridge’s head.

Thank God that ever from mine early days
My steps have been in love’s delightful ways.
Love stood beside me when my life was new,
And from my mother’s breast love’s milk I drew.
White as that milk are now my hairs, but still
Sweet thoughts of love mine aged bosom thrill.
Still in my heart the youthful warmth I feel,
While in my ear reëchoes Love’s appeal : —

“ In love, O Jami, have thy days been passed :
Die in that love gay-hearted to the last.
Some tale of love’s adventure, that may win
Thy name remembrance in the world, begin :
Some picture with thy finest pen assay,
Which still may live when thou art gone away.”

I heard entranced : my spirit rushed to meet
Love’s welcome order, for the voice was sweet ;
With gladsome heart the clear command obeyed,

And straight the magic of new spells essayed.
Now if kind Heaven will bless and aid the task,
And lade my palm tree with the fruit I ask,
I from this glowing heart will pour a song
To melt the tender and to move the strong ;
Veil the blue vault of heaven with cloud of sighs,
And with wild weeping dim its starry eyes.

YUSUF.

In this orchestra full of vain deceit
The drum of Being, each in turn, we beat.
Each morning brings new truth to light and fame,
And on the world falls lustre from a name.
If in one constant course the ages rolled,
Full many a secret would remain untold.
If the sun's splendor never died away,
Ne'er would the market of the stars be gay.
If in our gardens endless frost were king,
No rose would blossom at the kiss of Spring.

When Adam's service in the temple ceased,
Seth took his station as presiding priest.
He passed away, and Idris ¹ next began
In this sad world to preach pure love to man.
When he was called away to read in heaven,
To Noah's watchful care our faith was given.
When Noah sank beneath death's whelming wave,
To Allah's friend ² the door admittance gave.

¹ Enoch. Idris is derived from *darasa*, "he read," and the following line contains a play on the word.

² Abraham.

When heavenly mansions claimed him for a guest,
 Isaac the treasure which he left possessed.
 When Isaac wearied of the world and died,
 The voice of Jacob was religion's guide.
 He lived and prospered : planted by his hand,
 His banner waved o'er Shain¹ and Canaan's land,
 Wherein he made his dwelling. Rich was he
 In patriarchal wealth and progeny ;
 And sheep and rams cropped on his hills their food
 Like ants and locusts for their multitude.
 Twelve sons were his. Among them Yusuf won
 The father's heart, his best beloved son,
 The darling of his age. The happy mother
 Bore him the heavenly moon's terrestrial brother.
 In the heart's garden a fair plant was reared ;
 A bright young moon in the soul's heaven appeared ;
 In Abraham's rose-bed a sweet blossom, bright
 In garb of tender beauty, sprang to light ;
 In the House of Isaac there rose a star
 Whose splendor streamed through the sky afar ;
 In the garden of Jacob a tulip grew,
 The balm of his heart and its sorrow too :
 A fawn of the sweetest odor, that made
 Cathay² envy the fields where his young feet strayed.
 The mother, while earth was her place of rest,
 Dewed the babe's sweet lips from her loving breast.
 When two glad years she had nursed her son,
 Time poisoned her food and her course was run.

¹ Syria.² Khutan or Chinese Tartary, famous for its musk-deer.

That pearl from the ocean of grace was left
An orphan in tears, of her love bereft.
The father pitied the babe. The fair
Young pearl he gave to his sister's care ;
And her heart's dear nursling, a bird endued
With gay wings, roamed in the garden of food.¹
Then stood the child on his baby feet,
And the lisping words of his lips were sweet.
Not for an instant the dame would part
From the infant whose love had enchain'd her heart.
On her bosom at night, like her soul, he lay,
And was ever the sun of her eyes by day.

But the love of the father grew strong, and he
Would fain the face of his darling see ;
He longed that the babe, who alone could kill
The grief of his heart, should be near him still ;
Day and night he would have him near,
A moon the gloom of his soul to cheer.
Thus to his sister he said : — “ O thou
Whom love for me bends like the willow bough,
My Yusuf, my child, to my side restore ;
His absence is grief I can bear no more.
Let him come to the place where I pray alone,
To the dreary cell where I make my moan.”

The sister heard the words that he said ;
In the sign of obedience she bowed her head,
But plotted deep in her heart the while
To bring the child back to her home by guile.
She had a belt which Isaac had given,

¹ Was weaned and began to eat.

Worn by him long in the service of Heaven :
 Free from all evil was he whose hand
 Bound on his body that blessed band.
 When she sent the boy to his father, she braced
 The girdle secretly round his waist,
 Fastened so deftly that Yusuf felt
 No strain or touch of the supple belt.
 So the boy went forth. But a sudden shout
 And a bitter cry from the dame rang out :
 "Lost is the girdle I wore." She left
 None unaccused of the graceless theft.
 Those of her household came at her call,
 And, ranged before her, she searched them all.
 At last came the turn of Yusuf, and round
 His waist the girdle she sought was found.

There was a law for repressing crime,
 Fixed for the faithful in ancient time,
 Which to the injured owner gave
 The captured thief for his thrall and slave.
 Thus, by the fraud she had plotted caught,
 The boy again to her home was brought.
 Glad was her eye and her soul elate,
 But that eye soon closed at the stroke of Fate.

The heart of Jacob at last reposèd,
 As he gazed with his fond eyes that never closed ;
 From the sons that were round him he looked away,
 And turned to him as we turn to pray.
 For Yusuf now was his only thought
 In each work that he planned, in each aim that he
 sought.

In Yusuf only his soul had delight,
For only Yusuf his eye grew bright.

How may I tell the boy's beauty? Where
Could Houri or Peri be found so fair?

When the moonlight shines on the landscape, none
Would turn to look on a garish sun.

He was a moon in the sphere of grace
That threw a soft light over life and space:
And yet no moon, but a sun that lent
His light to the moon of the firmament.

But shall I his light to the sun's compare—
To the false mirage of the desert air?

"Twas a wondrous ineffable lustre, far
Beyond the brightness of things that are;
For the One Unspeakable God in that frame
Lay concealed under Yusuf's name.

How shall we marvel if, fostered long
In the father's bosom, his love grew strong?

Zulaikha, envied of Houris, at rest
In her virgin bower afar in the West,
Ne'er had seen the sun of his beauty gleam,
But was snared by his loveliness seen in a dream.
If Love's dominion no distance can bar,
When heart is near heart he can never be far.

ZULAIKHA.

Thus the masters of speech record,
In whose bosoms the treasures of words are stored:
There was a king in the West.¹ His name,

¹ In Mauritania.

Taimus, was spread wide by the drum of fame.
Of royal power and wealth possessed,
No wish unanswered remained in his breast.
His brow gave lustre to glory's crown,
And his foot gave the thrones of the mighty renown.
With Orion from heaven his host to aid,
Conquest was his when he bared his blade.
His child Zulaikha was passing fair,
None in his heart might with her compare ;
Of his royal house the most brilliant star,
A gem from the chest where the treasures are.
Praise cannot equal her beauty, no ;
But its faint, faint shadow my pen may show.
Like her own bright hair falling loosely down,
I will touch each charm to her feet from her crown.
May the soft reflection of that bright cheek,
Lend light to my spirit and bid me speak,
And that flashing ruby, her mouth, bestow
The power to tell of the things I know.

Her stature was like to a palm tree grown
In the garden of grace where no sin is known.
Bedewed by the love of her father the king,
She mocked the cypress that rose by the spring.
Sweet with the odor of musk, a snare
For the heart of the wise was the maiden's hair.
Tangled at night, in the morning through
Her long thick tresses a comb she drew,
And cleft the heart of the musk-deer in twain
As for that rare odor he sighed in vain.
A dark shade fell from her loose hair sweet

As jasmine over the rose of her feet.
 A broad silver tablet her forehead displayed
 For the heaven-set lessons of beauty made.
 Under its edge two inverted Nuns¹
 Showed, black as musk, their splendid half-moons,
 And beneath them lively and bright were placed
 Two Sads² by the pen of her Maker traced.
 From Nun to the ring of the Mim³ there rose,
 Pure as silver, like Alif,⁴ her nose.
 To that cipher her mouth add Alif, then
 She had ten strong spells for the conquest of men.⁴
 That laughing ruby to view exposed
 A Sin⁵ when the knot of her lips unclosed
 At the touch of her pure white teeth, and between
 The lines of crimson their flash was seen.
 Her face was the garden of Iram,⁶ where
 Roses of every hue are fair.
 The dusky moles that enhanced the red
 Were like Moorish boys playing in each rose-bed.
 Of silver that paid no tithe, her chin
 Had a well with the Water of Life therein.
 If a sage in his thirst came near to drink,

¹ The letter *Nun* of the Arabic alphabet; pronounced noon.

² The letter *Sad* is supposed, in its right-hand portion, to resemble the eye.

³ The small circular part of the letter *Mim* is compared to a mouth.

⁴ *Alif* is a long straight letter; it stands for the number one, and, prefixed to a cipher, notes 10.

⁵ The letter *Sin* bears a rough resemblance to teeth.

⁶ A fabulous garden in Arabia, like the Garden of the Hesperides of the Greeks.

He would feel the spray ere he reached the brink,
 But lost were his soul if he nearer drew,
 For it was a well and a whirlpool too.
 Her neck was of ivory. Thither drawn,
 Came with her tribute to beauty the fawn ;
 And the rose hung her head at the gleam of the skin
 Of shoulders fairer than jessamine.
 Her breasts were orbs of a light most pure,
 Twin bubbles new-risen from fount Kafur :¹
 Two young pomegranates grown on one spray,
 Where bold hope never a finger might lay.
 The touchstone itself was proved false when it tried
 Her arms' fine silver thrice purified ;
 But the pearl-pure amulets fastened there
 Were the hearts of the holy absorbed in prayer.
 The loveliest gave her their souls for rue,²
 And round the charm their own heartstrings drew.
 Her arms filled her sleeves with silver from them
 Whose brows are bound with the diadem.
 To labor and care her soft hand lent aid,
 And to wounded hearts healing unction laid.
 Like reeds were those taper fingers of hers,
 To write on each heart love's characters.
 Each nail on those fingers so long and slim
 Showed a new moon laid on a full moon's brim,
 And her small closed hand made the moon confess
 That she never might rival its loveliness.
 Two columns fashioned of silver upheld

¹ Camphor: the name of a well in Paradise.

² The small black seeds of the wild rue were used in enchantments.

That beauty which never was paralleled,
And, to make the tale of her charms complete,
They were matched by the shape of her exquisite feet.
Feet so light and elastic no maid might show,
So perfectly fashioned from heel to toe.
If on the eye of a lover she stepped,
Her foot would float on the tear he wept.

What shall I say of her gems and gold?
Weak were my tale when my best were told.
She was not fairer for gold or gem,
But her perfect loveliness glorified them.
Each gem the tax of a realm, she set
On her forehead a glistering coronet :
And the rubies that hung from her fine ears stole
Each gazer's senses, and heart and soul.
A thousand jewels most rich and rare
Studded the band that confined her hair.
Not a hand but hers had the art to twist
The bracelet which circled her delicate wrist.
What need I say of her jewels more?
Glistering anklets of gold she wore.
She moved through her chambers in raiment wrought
With gold, from Egypt and Syria bought,
Or with languishing looks on her couch she leant
In brocades which China and Rum¹ had sent.
She decked her beauty with some new dress
Each morn that she lit with her loveliness.
As the moon each night by fresh stars is met,
So she wore not twice the same coronet.

¹ Greece.

The hem of her mantle alone might gain
 A kiss of that foot while kings sought it in vain ;
 And no hand but the fold of her robe embraced
 The delicate stem of her dainty waist.

Maidens like cypresses straight and tall,
 With Peri faces, obeyed her call ;
 And by day and by night in her service stood
 The Houris' loveliest sisterhood.
 No burthen as yet had her sweet soul borne ;
 Never her foot had been pierced by a thorn.
 No breath of passion her heart might stir,
 And to love and be loved was unknown to her.
 Like the languid narcissus she slept at night,
 And hailed like an opening bud the light.
 With silver-faced maidens in childhood's hour,
 And gazelle-like playmates in garden and bower,
 Heedless of Fate and its cruel play,
 Sport was her business and life was gay.
 By no fear of peril or woe oppressed,
 Blithe was each thought of her virgin breast,
 For she knew not the fate that the days would bring,
 Or what terrible birth from the nights would spring.

THE FIRST VISION.

Sweet as the morning of life, the night
 Was filled like the springtide of youth with delight.
 Each bird was asleep, and each fish in the rill,
 And even the stream of event was still.
 In this garden, the joy of uncounted eyes,

All were at rest save the stars in the skies.
Night had hushed the tongue of the tinkling bell,
And stolen the sense of the sentinel.
His twisted tail, as he curled him round,
Was a collar to choke the voice of the hound.
The bird of night had no power to sing,
For his reed was cut with the sword of his wing.
The drowsy watchman scarce raised his eye,
And the palace dome, where it rose on high,
Wore, as his senses had well-nigh fled,
The form of a monstrous poppy-head.
The drummer ceased, and his hand, o'ercome
By the might of slumber, lay still on the drum,
Ere the loud-voiced Muezzin calling to prayer
Had rolled up the beds of the sleepers there.
Her narcissus eyes¹ in deep slumber closed,
Sweetly the sweet-lipped Zulaikha reposèd.
Tresses of spikenard her pillow pressed,
And the rose of her limbs strewed the couch of her rest,
While the hair dishevelled on that fair head
Wrote on the rose with each silken thread.
The outward eye of the maiden slept,
But the eye of her spirit its vigil kept ;
And she saw before her a fair youth stand —
Nay, 'twas a being from spirit-land :
From the world of glory, more lovely far
Than the large-eyed damsels of Paradise are ;
For his face made their beauty and glances dim,
And their glances and beauty were stolen from him.

¹ Eyes heavy with sleep are frequently compared to the narcissus.

His form like a sapling was straight and tall,
 And the cypress tree was, to him, a thrall.¹
 His hair, a beautiful chain to bind
 The heart of the wisest, flowed unconfin'd.
 The sun and the moon confessed with shame
 That a purer light from his forehead came.
 The arch² of the mosque where the holy bow,
 Or the canopy made for their rest, was his brow.
 His eyes, where the tint of the surma was new,
 With a dart from each lash pierced the bosom through,
 And the pearls, when the rubies apart were drawn,
 Were as lightning's flash through the red of dawn.

Zulaikha saw, and a moment — one —
 Was too much, for the maid was forever undone.
 One glance at that loveliest form, which passed
 Men, and Peris, and Houris, she cast,
 And to that sweet face and those charms a slave
 Her heart — nay, a hundred hearts — she gave.
 From the visionary form she would never forget
 The plant of love in her breast was set.

* * * * *

THE LAST VISION.

Words would fail me to tell how fair
 Was the wondrous beauty she looked on there.
 The hem of his garment was fast in her hold,
 And over his feet her hot weepings rolled.
 And she cried : “ O thou, for whose dear love flies

¹ The usual epithet of the cypress is “ free.”

² The arch toward which worshippers turn in prayer.

All calm from my bosom, all sleep from mine eyes,
By the Pure One who made thee so pure from thy birth,
And chose thee most fair of the beauties of earth,
Pity the anguish I suffer, disclose
Thy name and thy city, and lighten my woes."

He answered : " If this may content thee, hear ;
In Egypt's land I am Grand Vizir.
Mid her proudest princes my place is high,
And the trusted friend of the king am I."

These words from her idol Zulaikha heard,
And her spirit, long dead, with new life was stirred,
In the quickening balm of his sweet voice came
To her soul new patience, and strength to her frame.
She rose from her dream, and her heart was gay ;
The cloud of madness had passed away.

* * * * *

Pleasant and gay were Zulaikha's words,
And her voice was sweet as a musical bird's ;
The seal of the casket of speech she broke,
And of many a city and country spoke,
And of Sham and Rum, and sugar ran down
From her lips at mention of Egypt's renown ;¹
Of the deeds that her people had done of old,
Of the Grand Vizir and his state she told.
When she spoke of the title she loved so well,
As falls a shadow, to earth she fell ;
She rained down blood from the cloud of her eyes,
And the voice of her weeping went up to the skies.

¹ Egypt (Misr) was famous for sugar, which in India is still called *misri*.

Thus passed her day and her night ; of naught
 Save her love and his country she spoke or thought.
 When she mentioned his title, her voice was glad,
 Else she lay sullen and silent and sad.

THE AMBASSADOR.

Day by day Zulaikha's despair
 Grew a weight too heavy for her to bear.
 In blank pale longing, though overcast
 With the black hue of sorrow, her days were passed.
 The father pitied the maiden's grief
 And counselled thus for her soul's relief :
 " A prudent envoy I needs must send
 To Egypt's Vizir that her woe may end,
 A tender message from her to bear,
 That the bonds of love may unite the pair."

He chose a chamberlain deeply skilled :
 With praise of his wisdom his ear he filled,
 And with many a present most rich and rare
 Bade him to Egypt's Vizir repair,
 And say : " O Prince on whose threshold lies
 Dust that is kissed by the circling skies,
 May the favor of Heaven increase each day
 Thy fame and honor and princely sway.
 In the House of Purity shines my Sun
 By whose splendor the envious moon is outdone.
 Higher her place than the moon's, I ween :
 Her shadow never the sun has seen.
 Purer than pearls in their virgin shells
 Her splendor the lustre of stars excels.

She veils her moonlight from the world, and debars
From the sight of her beauty the curious stars.
Only her comb may loosen each tress,
And her mirror behold her loveliness.
Only the coils of her hair are blest
On her delicate foot for a while to rest.
The hem of her mantle — and only this —
As she walks in the courtyard her foot may kiss.
Never her chin has been touched by her maid,
On her lip not the sugar-cane's finger laid.
She shrinks away from that flower who throws
The veil of her beauty aside, the rose.
From the sweet narcissus her eyes decline,
For its blossom is heavy and drunk with wine.
Even her shadow's pursuit she would shun,
And fly from the lustre of moon and sun.
To the stream and the fountain she will not repair
Lest her eye should meet her reflection there.
She dwells in her home behind screen and bar,
But the fame of her beauty is known afar.
A hundred kings with their hearts on fire
In eager hope to her hand aspire.
From Rum to Damascus beyond the flood
Each heart for her love has drunk deep of blood.
But longing for Egypt has filled her breast,
And she turns her eye and her heart from the rest.
For Rum she can find in that heart no room,
And gay Damascus is naught but gloom.
Her eye toward Egypt has marked the road,
And the Nile of her tears has for Egypt flowed.

I know but her longing ; I know not the cause,
 Or the charm that to Egypt her spirit draws.
 'Tis her destined home, and from Egypt came
 The dust, I ween, that composed her frame.
 If in thy sight it seem good, I have planned
 To send her to thee in her chosen land.
 If she be not peerless in beauty and grace
 She may hold in thy palace a menial's place."

The Grand Vizir heard the speech, and, amazed,
 To the highest heaven his head was raised.
 He bowed and made answer : " And what am I
 That a seed of this doubt in my heart should lie ?
 The grace of thy lord lifts me up from the mire,
 And 'tis meet that my head to the heavens aspire.
 I am the dust which the cloud of spring
 Bedews with the drops which he loves to fling.
 If a hundred tongues like the grass-blades grew,
 My tongues to thank him were all too few.
 The grace of the monarch is guarantee
 That Fortune ever shall favor me.
 With the head of my foot, with the eyes of my shoe,
 I would hasten to meet him, his pleasure to do.
 But to Egypt's ruler, the great and wise,
 I am bound so closely by duty's ties,
 That, were I absent a single hour,
 I should feel the weight of the sword of his power.
 Then pardon the servant whom duties bind,
 And impute not the blame to a haughty mind.
 Should the king thy lord to my prayer attend,
 Two hundred litters of gold will I send

With thousands of boys and maidens, all
Like the Tuba tree,¹ graceful, and straight, and tall ;
Those boys are noble, and free from vice,
And purer than children of Paradise.
Their laughing lips are most sweet, with rare
Pearl and ruby they bind their hair ;
With caps coquettishly set on the side
Of their heads, on saddles of gold they ride.
And the maidens are robed like the Houris ; they
Are pure of all blemish of water and clay.
Above their bright faces are full-drawn bows,
And their sweet locks shadow their cheeks of rose.
All gems and jewels their beauty adorn,
And veiled in litters of gold are they borne.
Their guides shall be elders, the pillars of State,
Prudent in council and wise in debate,
To receive the fair maid with due honor, and bring
To my humble home the sweet child of the king."

He ceased : the envoy bowed down his head,
And kissed the ground at his feet, and said :
" Spring of the glory of Egypt, thou
Hast added a grace to thy favors now.
But send no escort ; my lord will provide
From his ample household a train for the bride.
The boys and the delicate maids who dwell
In his courts are too many for number to tell ;
Robes of honor in store has he,
More than the leaves of a shady tree,
Showering gems from a liberal hand

¹ Tuba is the name of a tree in Paradise.

More than the desert has grains of sand ;
 To please thee only his wish is bent,
 And blest is the man with whom he is content.
 If the vintage be worthy thy table, he
 Will quickly send the sweet fruit to thee.”

THE DEPARTURE.

To release Zulaikha’s sad heart from pain
 From Egypt returned the wise chamberlain,
 And even the selfish rejoiced to hear
 The message he brought from the Grand Vizir.
 Her rose of felicity bloomed anew,
 And the *Huma*¹ of fortune above her flew.
 A dream had bound her in fetters : she
 Saw a vision again and her soul was free.
 So ever from dream or from fancy springs
 The joy or the sorrow which this world brings.
 Most happy is he who from both can fly,
 And lightly pass the dread whirlpool by.

Her father rejoiced, and with care and speed
 He prepared the escort the bride would need.
 Thousands of maids in their youthful bloom
 He chose from the fairest of Rus² and Rum.
 Their breasts were pomegranates, their mouths, half-shut,
 Showed each like a tender pistachio-nut,

¹ The *huma* is a fabulous bird whose shadow falling on a man’s head denotes that he will become a king.

² Russia.

And over each bosom and cheek was spread
The sweet faint flush of a young rose-bed.
Orient pearls from their fine ears hung,
And black bows over their eyes were strung,
Pure of all dye as the leaves of the rose
In the cool of the morning when zephyr blows.
On tulip blossoms fell scented curls,
And on rounded necks was the glimmer of pearls ;
And a thousand boys with bright eyes that took
The heart of a maiden with each long look,
With red caps stuck on their heads oblique,
And loose locks shading each youthful cheek.
Each of his gold-hued garment was vain,
'Twas soft as the rosebud, and tight as the cane.
Each tress escaping, as loosely it flowed,
Like spikenard under a tulip showed.
Their jewelled belts round their fine waists clung,
And a hundred hearts on their bright hair hung.
There were thousand horses of noble breed,
Gentle to saddle, unmatched in speed ;
With paces easy as rivulets, all
Fleeter at need than the flying ball.
If they saw but the shade of a falling lash,
Away from the race-course of Time would they dash.
Swift as wild asses they scoured the plain,
And like birds of the water they swam the main.
Their tails were knotted like canes ; the dint
Of their strong hoofs shattered the hardest flint.
They flew over the hill like an even lawn,
But stayed their speed when the rein was drawn.

And a thousand camels, a wondrous sight,
 With their mountain backs and their stately height.
 Mountains, supported on pillars, were they,
 And the course of their tempest no hand might stay.
 Like holy hermits, their food was spare ;
 Burthens they bore as the patient bear.
 Through a hundred deserts unwearied they went,
 With thorns, as with spikenard and rose, content.
 They tasted no food and they closed no eye,
 But toiled on through the sand at the drivers' cry.
 A hundred loads from the royal store,
 Each the yearly yield of a province, they bore ;
 Two hundred carpets of rich brocade,
 In Rum and Damascus and Egypt made ;
 Two hundred caskets of gems most rare,—
 Pearls, sapphires, Badakhshan's rubies were there ;
 Two hundred trays with fine musk therein,
 And amber, and aloe from Comorin.
 Like a meadow in China each spot was bright
 Where the driver rested his camels at night.

Her father's care for Zulaikha supplied
 A litter fair as the bed of a bride.
 Of the wood of the aloe its frame was made,
 And the well-joined boards were with gold o'erlaid.
 Its gold-wrought awning was bright as the sun,—
 Jamshid¹ never boasted a brighter one.
 Pearl in clusters, and many a pin
 And stud of gold decked it without and within ;
 And finest needlework graced each fold

¹A celebrated Persian king, the builder of Persepolis.

Of the heavy hangings of tissue of gold.

Thus with imperial pomp and pride

They carried to Memphis the beautiful bride.

Her litter was borne by swift steeds, as the rose

Is wafted by winds from her place of repose.

Her maidens followed, with figures fine

As the graceful cypress, the plane, or the pine ;

With arm and bosom and cheek and hair

Like jasmine sweet or like jasmine fair.

You had said that the bloom of the young spring-

time

Was fleeting away to a distant clime.

Iram's garden envied the spot which those

Bright flowers of the palace to rest them chose ;

Where the boys dismounting their pastime took,

And the girls from their litters shot many a look,

And spread the fine net of their beautiful hair

Till each captured her prey in the silken snare ;

And each boy shot from his eye a dart

That enslaved a maiden and touched her heart.

Here were seen gallantry, glances, and smiles,

The lover's wooing, the maiden's wiles.

Lovers and loved were assorted well,

Those eager to buy and these ready to sell.

Thus each stage of the journey they passed,

And Memphis city was gained at last.

Zulaikha — for Fortune now seemed her friend —

Had longed in her heart for the journey's end,

When the dawn should rise on her night of woe

And the pangs of the parted no more she should know.

But oh ! black is the night that before her lies ;
 'Tis an age till the sun of her joy shall rise.

Through the glare of day, through the gloom of night,
 They travelled, and Memphis was now in sight.
 From the city a messenger came at speed —
 Whose litter the coming pomp should precede
 To bring the glad news to the Grand Vizir,
 That she whom he looked for was near, was near.
 "Rise up, rise up, and with eager feet
 Thy bliss who approaches go forth to meet."

THE WELCOME.

To the Grand Vizir the glad news was brought,
 And he deemed he had compassed each aim he sought.
 He bade proclamation be made, and all
 The army of Memphis obeyed the call,
 That with full equipment and arms complete,
 At the place appointed the hosts should meet.

From head to foot they were bright to behold,
 Smothered in jewels, and sheen of gold.
 Myriad boys and maidens were there,
 With cheeks of the rose, and like full moons fair.
 Like a palm-tree of gold in the saddle set,
 Showed each youth with his collar and coronet,
 And bright in her charms with their sevenfold aid,¹
 Screened in her litter of gold was each maid ;

¹ *Henna* for the hands; *surma* or *kohl* for the eyes, *wasma* for the eyebrows; *rouge* and *sapedab*, or white water, for the face; and bracelets and anklets. Other enumerations are also given.

Loudly in triumph glad voices rang
As sweet-toned singers in unison sang,
The harp of the minstrel was strung anew,
And the music he made was of triumph too.

Of meeting and pleasure the soft flute spoke,
And tender thoughts in each heart awoke,
While sorrow fled far at the merry din
Of the drum, and rebeck, and violin.

Thus in jubilee blithe and gay,
The escort from Memphis pursued its way.
Three stages, as journeys the moon, they passed,
And the sun of beauty was reached at last.
To a smooth and spacious meadow they came,
Studded with thousands of domes of flame,
You had said that the sky had poured down on the
plain

Its brightest stars in a golden rain.
There rose a pavilion, girt with a wall
Of chosen sentinels, high over all.
Laughed the Vizir as he saw it gleam,
As the orient laughs with the first sunbeam.
Swift from his steed he alighted and bent
His eager steps to the royal tent.
The harem warders came forth to meet
The noble, and bowed to the earth at his feet.
He asked of their lady, and bade them say,
What of the weather and toil of the way.

Of the princely gifts that were with him, those
That were fairest and best in his sight he chose :
Sweet-smiling boys of his own household,

With caps and girdles ablaze with gold ;
 High-bred horses with golden gear,
 Covered with jewels from croup to ear ;
 Raiment of satin and woven hair,
 And pearls from his storehouse most rich and rare ;
 Sugar of Egypt, with care refined,
 And sherbet of every color and kind —
 All on the spacious plain were arrayed,
 And with courteous words his excuses he made.
 He ordered the march at the break of day,
 When homeward again he would bend his way.

DESPAIR.

The ancient Hraven delights to cheat
 The children of earth with his vain deceit.
 The heart of the lover with hope he will stay,
 And then dashes the idle phantom away.
 The fruit that he longed for was shown afar,
 And his bosom will bear through his life a scar.

A shadow lay on the ground, and near
 Zulaikha's tent stood the Grand Vizir.
 She dropped the rein of patience and prayed
 For one glance at her love with her nurse's aid.
 "O thou whose affection through life I have tried,
 I can bear this longing no longer," she cried.
 "Near a cup of sweet water the thirsty lip
 Is maddened with pain if it may not sip."

The faithful nurse marked the maiden's grief,
 And looked round the wall for a way of relief.

With her crafty finger she made a rent
Like a narrow eye in the cloth of the tent.
Zulaikha looked through with an eager eye,
But heaved from her bosom a long sad sigh :
“ Ah me ! that so wondrous a fate should befall !
Low in the dust lies my half-built wall.
This is not the youth of my vision, he
Whom after long troubles I hoped to see ;
Who seized the rein of my heart and stole
With his magic power my sense and soul ;
Who told me his secret and gently brought
Reason again to a mind distraught.
Alas ! the star of my hapless fate
Has left me deceived and disconsolate.
Palm trees I planted, but thistles grew :
I sowed Love’s seed, but the harvest is rue.
I endured for my treasure long sorrows and toils,
But the guardian dragon my labor foils.
I would cull the rose for the precious scent,
But, alas ! my robe with the thorn is rent.
I am one athirst in a desert land,
Seeking for water and mocked with sand.
Dry is my tongue with unbearable thirst,
And the blood from my fervorous lip would burst.
I see at a distance fair water gleam,
And I struggle and crawl to the tempting stream,
And find no water but sand whereon
Deluding beams of the bright sun shone.
A camel am I, on the mountain strayed,
With a mountain of hunger and toil down-weighed,

The stones are sharp and my feet are sore :
 I fear to stay but can move no more.
 A form I see with my bloodshot eye,
 And I deem that my lost companion is nigh.
 My weary steps to his side I bend :
 'Tis a ravening lion and not my friend.
 I am a sailor ; my vessel sank,
 And I float forlorn on a single plank.
 On the restless wave I am tossed on high
 And low in the depths of the ocean lie.
 A light skiff near me comes on o'er the wave,
 And my heart is glad, for it comes to save.
 Nearer and nearer my rescue draws :
 Ah ! 'tis a shark with his cruel jaws.
 Ah me ! of unfortunate lovers none
 Is helpless as I am, ah no, not one.
 My heart is stolen, my lover is fled :
 A stone lies on my back and dust on my head.
 O Heaven ! pity my many woes
 And a door of hope, in thy mercy, unclose.
 If Thou wilt not bring my dear love to my side,
 O save me from being another's bride.
 Preserve the pure name of the hapless maid,
 No polluting touch on her vesture laid.
 I made a vow to my lover, mine own,
 To keep my love ever for him alone.
 Ah, let not grief my poor heart consume,
 Nor give to a dragon my virgin bloom."

Thus she ceased not to sigh and complain,
 And tears on her eyelashes hung like rain.

Transfixed with anguish her young heart bled,
And low in the dust lay her beautiful head.
Then the Bird of Comfort¹ came near, and there fell
On her ear the sweet message of Gabriel :
“ Lift thy head, sad maiden, and cease to repine,
For easy shall be this sore burden of thine.
The Vizir is not he whom thou longest to gain,
But without him thy wish thou canst never attain.
Through him wilt thou look on thy loved one’s eyes,
And through him at last thou wilt win the prize.”

Zulaikha heard, and in grateful trust
Bowed down humbly her head to the dust.
She ceased from weeping, and strove like a bud
To drink in silence her own heart’s blood.
Fraught with deep grief was each breath that came,
But speechless she suffered woe’s scorching flame.
Her eyes, though eager, must look and wait,
Till the knot shall be loosed by the hand of Fate.

THE RECEPTION.

With a drum of gold the bright firmament beat
At morn the signal for night’s retreat.
The stars with the night at the coming of day
Broke up their assembly and passed away.
From that drum, gold-scattering, light was shed,
Like a peacock’s glorious plumes outspread.
In princely garb the Vizir arrayed,
Placed in her litter the moon-bright maid.

¹ Gabriel, the messenger of heaven.

In the van, in the rear, on every side,
 He ordered his soldiers about the bride,
 And golden umbrellas a soft shade threw
 O'er the heads of Zulaikha's retinue.
 The singers' voices rang loud and high,
 As the camels moved at the drivers' cry,
 And the heaven above, and below, the ground
 Echoed afar with the mingled sound.

Glad were the maids of Zulaikha's train
 That their lady was free from her sorrow and pain ;
 And the prince and his people rejoiced that she
 The idol and queen of his house should be.
 Alone in her litter she wept her woes,
 And her lamentation to Heaven arose :
 "Why hast thou treated me thus, O Fate,
 And left me unhappy and desolate?
 For what sin against thee, what fault of mine,
 Hast thou left me hopeless to weep and pine?
 Thou stolest my heart in a dream, like a thief,
 And I awoke but to suffer still bitterer grief.
 But if thou hast ruined my life, mine all,
 Why, in my folly, on thee do I call?
 Nay, at the moment when help was near,
 Thou hast torn me from home, and from all that was
 dear.
 Beneath the weight of one sorrow I bent,
 And thou addest the burden of banishment.
 If thine only aid is to rend the breast,
 Oh ! what must she feel whom thou torturtest !
 Break not the cup of my patience, nor set,

Again to ensnare me, thy terrible net.
Thine was the promise that, sorrows passed,
I should find sweet rest for my soul at last.
With thy word of comfort I fain was content ;
But is this the rest that the promise meant ? ”

Thus Zulaikha, weary and faint
With her burden of sorrow, poured forth her plaint.
Loud rose the cry of the host meanwhile,
“ Memphis ! Memphis ! the Nile ! the Nile ! ”
Horse and foot onward in tumult hied,
And rejoicing, stood on the river’s side.

To the Grand Vizir, as by duty taught,
Trays piled high with treasures they brought,
To lade the bride’s litter with wealth untold,
Of the rarest jewels and finest gold.
Each brought his gift, and a mighty cry,
Welcome ! welcome ! went up to the sky.
On the head of Zulaikha fell pearl in showers
As the rain of spring on the opening flowers
Till the lady’s litter beneath a heap
Of countless jewels was buried deep.
Wherever the feet of the camels trod,
They trampled jewels, not sand or sod.
When the spark leapt forth at the courser’s dint,
The shoe and the ruby were steel and flint ;
In ranks extended o’er many a mile,
Still scattering jewels, they left the Nile,
And the rain of pearl from their hands that fell
Made each fish’s gill like a pearl-rich shell,
And the countless derhams they cast therein

Made the crocodile gleam with a silver skin.

 Thus the escort in proud array,
To the prince's palace pursued their way ;
Nay, 'twas an earthly paradise ; sun
And moon in their splendor were here outdone.
In the midst of the palace was set a throne,
Fairest of all that the world has known.

The hand of a skilful artist had made
The glorious seat with fine gems o'erlaid.
Close to the throne her litter was placed,
And the seat by that jewel of ladies graced.
But still no rest to her sad soul came,
The gold she pressed was as burning flame.
The peerless maiden was brighter yet
Than the throne and the crown on her forehead set.
But the glittering crown that her temples pressed
Increased the mountain of woe in her breast ;
They showered pearl on her head like rain :
It tortured her heart like a flood of pain.
Pearls, the desire of the maids of the sky,
Filled with the pearls of her tears her eye.

 In the battle of Love, who cares for a crown,
When a hundred heads to the dust go down ?
Who for the loveliest pearl will care,
When her eye is damp with the dew of despair ?
Shame on the wretch who would value a throne,
When his love is lost, and he pines alone !

ENVY.

Sages, who guided the pen of old,
Thus the story have framed and told :
As Yusuf in stature and beauty grew,
His father's heart to himself he drew ;
The old man turned from the rest aside
To his own eye's apple, his joy and pride ;
And to him such kindness and favor showed,
That the hearts of his brothers with envy glowed.

In the court of the house stood an ancient tree
Whose leafy branches were fair to see ;
In their vesture of green like monks the sprays
Danced in a rapture of joy and praise ;
From the level ground of the court it grew,
And its stately height a long shadow threw ;
Each leaf on the tree was a vocal tongue,
Singing a hymn as the branches swung.
To heaven rose the boughs of the topmost stem,
Whose birds were the angels who rested on them,
When a son to Jacob by God was given ;
From that tree that rivalled the Lote tree¹ in heaven,
A tender branchlet sprouted anew,
And still with the growth of the infant grew ;
And when the boy came to his manhood he
Received a green staff from the honored tree.
But for Yusuf, first in his father's eyes,
A staff from the tree were too mean a prize ;

¹ The Sidrah or Lote tree is the seat of the angel Gabriel in Paradise.

A severed bough were no gift for one
From his own soul's garden, his darling son.

One night the boy to his father cried :
“ O thou whose wishes are ne'er denied,
To the Lord of Paradise offer thy prayer,
And win me a staff from the garden there,
That whithersoever my feet may stray,
From youth to age it may guide my way.”

Humbly the father bowed down and prayed,
And suit to the Lord for his darling made.
Then Gabriel came from the Lote tree's height,
A topaz staff in his hand shone bright,
That never had suffered a wound or flaw
From the axe of Time or from Change's saw,
Precious in value, but light to wield,
Splendid with hues of its native field.
And a voice was heard : “ Take the staff I bring,
Which shall prop, as a pillar, the throne of a king.”

Thus Yusuf by Heaven was favored and blest ;
But envy burnt fierce in each brother's breast.
A hundred wood staves were a lighter load
For them than this one which the Lord bestowed.
Fell fancy wrought in each bosom apart,
And each sowed the seed of deep hate in his heart ;
He nursed the seedling with tender care,
But shame was the fruit which the tree should bear.

YUSUF'S DREAM.

How blest is he who can close his eye
And let the vain pageants of life pass by ;

Untouched by the magic of earth can keep
His soul awake while the senses sleep ;
Scorn the false and the fleeting that meets the view,
And see what is hidden and firm and true.

Before the eyes of his sire one night,
Who loved him more than his own eyesight,
Yusuf his head on a pillow laid,
And slept while a smile on his sweet mouth played.
But the heart of Jacob was troubled while
On that sleeping face he beheld the smile.
When, damp with the dew of their soft repose,
Those eyes of narcissus began to unclose,
And, like his own fortune, the boy was awake.
Thus to his darling the father spake :
“ Why, O sweeter than sugar, didst thou
Wear a sugar-sweet smile on thy lip but now ? ”
And Yusuf answered : “ Father, I dreamed,
And the sun and moon and eleven stars seemed
To gather about me, high honor to pay,
And their heads before me in dust to lay.”
“ Beware,” said the father, “ my son, beware ;
Thy secret vision to none declare.
Let not thy brothers the story know :
In a hundred ways they would work thee woe.
With hatred and envy their heart is stirred ;
They would hate thee more if the tale were heard.
The thought of this dream they would ne’er endure,
For the meaning thereof is too clear and sure.”
Thus, in his prudence the father spoke ;
But Fate the chain of his counsel broke.

One with whom Yusuf the secret shared,
To all the brothers the tale declared.
The secret that passes beyond a pair,
Is bruited abroad on the moving air.
“ Yes,” said the sage, “ but that pair are the lips,
And no secret is that which beyond them slips.”
The fury of carnage has oft been stirred,
And nobles have died for a spoken word.
Wise is the saw of the sage who said,
“ Who heeds his secret will keep his head.”
When the wild bird flies from her cage, in vain
Will ye follow her flight to ensnare her again.
When the tale to the ears of the brothers came,
They rent their garments with hearts aflame :
“ What ails our father,” they cried, “ that he
His loss and advantage should fail to see ?
What can come of a foolish boy
But the childish play that is all his joy ?
He works on all with deceit and lies,
And raises his value in folly’s eyes.
Our aged father his wiles ensnare,
And life with him will be hard to bear.
He rends the bond of affection apart,
And engrosses the love of our father’s heart.
Not content with the favor his arts have gained,
He wishes that we, pure-hearted, unstained,
Should bend our heads and adore in the dust
The stripling raised high by his father’s trust ;
Nay, father and mother, as well as we :
What will the end of this madness be ?

We, not this boy, are our father's friends ;
On us, not on him, his welfare depends.
On the hills in the daytime we guard his sheep,
And our nightly watch in his house we keep.
Our arm protects him from foemen's might,
And we, mid his friends, are his glory and light.
What is there in him but his guile that thus
His head is exalted o'er all of us?
Come, let us counsel together and plot
To drive him away to a distant spot.
Ne'er has he felt for our griefs and pains,
And banishment now the sole cure remains.
Quick to the task we must needs away !
Still it is left us to choose the way.
The thorn that springs fast for mischief should be
Torn up from the root ere it grow to a tree."

THE PLOT.

When Yusuf's brothers, with hatred fired,
Against the innocent boy conspired,
Said one : " Our hearts in our sorrow have bled,
And his blood should flow for the blood he has shed.
When the arm of the slayer is lifted to smite,
Can ye save your lives by a timely flight ?
Let him die the death, and our task is sped :
There comes no voice from the lip of the dead."
" Nay," cried a second, " 'tis not for us
To compass the death of the guiltless thus.
Though we check his folly, he may not bleed ;

We hold, remember, the one true creed.
We shall gain our end if we drive him hence
As well as by death-dealing violence.
Let us hide him far from our father's eyes
Where a wild and desolate valley lies ;
In a waste full of pitfalls, from help afar,
Where the ravenous wolves and the foxes are ;
His only water the tears of despair,
And his only bread the sun's scorching glare ;
Where the night around him for shade shall spread,
And thorns be the pillow to rest his head.
He may linger awhile neath the lonely sky,
But soon of himself he will waste and die,
Not a stain of his blood on our swords, and we
From the sword of his guile and deceit shall be free.”
“ Nay, this, my brother,” a third broke in,
“ Were the worst of murders and grievous sin.
’Tis better to perish, if die we must,
Not of hunger and thirst, but a dagger’s thrust.
This is my counsel, which seems more fit,
To search near and far for a deep dark pit,
And therein, cast down from his place of pride,
In sorrow and darkness the youth to hide.
Some travelling merchants may pass that way,
And halt at the well at the close of day.
They may lower for water a bucket and cord,
And the boy to the air will be thus restored.
Some merchant who looks on the prize will be glad
To take for a son or a slave the lad,
Who, carried away to a distant place,

Will vex us no longer with pain and disgrace."

Soon as he spoke of this living grave,
The brothers approved of the counsel he gave.
Unheeding the pit of their murderous thought,
The pit of dishonor they wildly sought.
In their evil purpose they all agreed
The heart of their father to wound and mislead.
Then to their labor they turned, each one ;
And the morrow was fixed for the deed to be done.

DECEIT.

Blest are the souls who are lifted above
The paltry cares of a selfish love ;
And conquering sense and its earthly ties,
Are dust in the path of the love they prize ;
Who add no weight to another's care,
And no weight of reproach from another bear,
But in this sad world are resigned to their lot,
Support their brethren and murmur not ;
Who sleep with no malice or fraud in their breast,
And rise as pure from their welcome rest.

The foes of Yusuf came glad and gay
As they thought of the counsel of yesterday,
With love on their tongue, in their heart fraud and
lies,
Like wolves that have taken the lamb's disguise,
In reverent duty their father to see,
And bowed them down on the bended knee.
They opened the flattering door of deceit,

And the words they uttered were soft and sweet.
They spoke awhile of things old and new,
And near and more near to their object drew :
“ Father, we weary of resting at home ;
Through the plain around us we fain would roam.
If thou wilt grant the permission we pray,
Hence will we wander at break of day.
Our brother Yusuf, the light of thine eyes,
Knows not the region which round us lies.
Wilt thou not send him with us ? Our joy
Will be great to attend on thy darling boy.
He stays in the house through the weary day :
Send him out with us to rove and play.
Through the field and the plain his steps we will guide,
Up to the slope and the steep hill’s side.
We will milk the ewes in the grassy field,
And drink with delight the sweet draught they yield.
Through beds of tulips our way will pass,
And our playground will be the carpet of grass.
We will steal the bright crowns of the tulips, and set
Their bloom on his brow for a coronet,
And the boy thus decked we will gently lead
In his graceful gait through the flowery mead.
We will watch the herds of the browsing deer,
And the wolf shall be slain if he venture near.
Perchance the fresh scene will his spirit restore,
And the dulness of home will oppress him no more.
Set a thousand marvels before a child,
Still only by play is his heart beguiled.”

The father heard as their suit they pressed,

But turned away and refused their request.
“ Why should he follow you ? ” thus he spake ;
“ My heart is sad for my darling’s sake.
I fear lest, eager and reckless, ye
The perils about him may fail to see.
I fear lest a wolf from the neighboring waste
Should sharpen his teeth the boy’s blood to taste ;
Should tear with keen fangs each delicate limb,
And rend my soul as he mangles him.”

Thus was their suit by the father denied :
Again to move him their arts they tried :
“ Think us not, father, such feeble men
That a single wolf can o’ermatch the ten.
We can seize, as we seize a fox, and slay
A lion making of men his prey.”

Thus they insisted. The father heard :
He gave no refusal, he spoke no word.
But his will at last by their prayers was bent,
And woe brought on his house by his silent consent.

THE WELL.

Shame, conjuring Heaven, whose fell delight
Is to bury each morn a fair moon from sight !
Who givest for prey to the wolf the gazelle
That browses at ease in life’s flowery dell.

When Yusuf in charge to those wolves was given,
“ See, they harry a lamb,” cried pitiless Heaven.
While yet in the ken of their father’s eyes,
Each strove, as in love, to be nearest the prize.
One raised him high on his back, and round

His waist another his strong arm wound.
But the touch of each hand was more rough and rude,
When they came to the desert of solitude.
From the shoulder of pity the burden they threw,
Where the flint-stones were hard, and the sharp thorns
grew.

Through the pitiless briars he walked unshod,
His rosy feet rent by the spines where he trod,
As he walked barefooted by thistle and thorn,
The silver skin of his hand was torn.
The tender soles of his young feet bled,
And, soft as the rose, like the rose were red.
If he lingered a moment behind the band,
One smote his fair cheek with a ruthless hand.
May the vengeful sword on the fierce hand fall
Which struck the fair face which is loved of all !
If he walked before them they rained their blows
On his neck like a rebel's till red wheals rose.
May each hand be bound to the neck with a chain,
That gave his soft neck that unmerited pain !
If he walked abreast in his trembling fear,
Hard hands on each side of him pulled his ear.
May the savage have naught but his fingers to clasp,
Who could hold that ear in his merciless grasp !
When he clung to one's skirt with a loud lament,
He was flung aside, and his collar rent.
When he lay at their feet in his utter dread,
They laughed as their cruel feet pressed on his head.
When his pale lips uttered a bitter cry,
With jeer and reproach came the harsh reply.

In the depth of despair with wild words he complained,
And the rose of his cheek like the tulip was stained.
Now in the dust, now in blood the boy lay,
And heartbroken cried in his utter dismay :
“ Where art thou, my father, where art thou? Why
Wilt thou heedlessly leave me to suffer and die?
See the son of her whom thou lovedst so well ;
See those who against wisdom and duty rebel.
What their hearts have devised for thy heart’s love, see,
And how they repay obligation to thee.
From the ground of thy soul a young rosebud grew,
And thy tender love fed it and nursed it with dew.
By anguish and thirst it lies withered and dried,
Its life is departing, its bright hues have died.
In a garden kept with each loving device,
Was planted a scion of Paradise.
By the blast of oppression the plant is o’erthrown,
By the thorn and the thistle its height overgrown.
The moon whose fair light for thy guidance was shed,
Which the dark gloom of fate ever failed to o’erspread,
Has suffered such hardship from Heaven on high,
That it prays the new moon its faint light to supply.”

Onward thus for a league they went,
He longing for peace, they on slaughter bent.
He was all tenderness, they were stern ;
His prayers were warm, their words cold in return.
They came at last to a well where they
Rested awhile from the toil of the way.
Like the grave of a tyrant, deep, dark as night,
It struck with horror the reason’s sight.

Like the mouth of a dragon its black jaws gaped —
A terrible portal whence none escaped.
A tyrant's dungeon was not so deep,
Where deadly snakes o'er the prisoner creep.
The depth was too deep for the reach of sense,
And wide was its horror's circumference.
Dire was the centre, the circle despair :
The spring was bitter and poison the air.
For living creature to draw a breath
In that terrible pit were his instant death.
No depths could be found better suited to quell
That rosy-cheeked moon than that horrible well.

Once more he endeavoured to move them ; again
Sought to touch their hard hearts in so soothing a strain
That, could it have heard his sweet pleading, a stone
Softer than wax in its fibres had grown.
But the heart of each brother grew harder still,
More firm the resolve of each murderous will.
How shall I tell it ? My heart grows weak ;
Of the deed they accomplished I scarce can speak.
On that delicate arm for which, soft and fair,
The silk of heaven were too rough to wear,
They firmly fastened a goat-hair cord
Whose every hair seemed a piercing sword.
A woollen rope round his delicate waist
Fine as a hair was securely braced.
His coat from his beautiful shoulders had slipped,
And he stood like a rose when her leaves are stripped.
So they rent the robe of their honor away,
And clothed them with shame till the Judgment Day.

They lowered him down in the deep dark well,
And sunk in the water half-way he fell.
Down into darkness by Fate was hurled
The sun that illumined the whole wide world.

But a stone jutting out from the rocky side,
Above the water a seat supplied.
That humble stone, as high Fate ordained,
A value greater than rubies gained.
The bitter water beneath his feet
At the sight of that ruby, his lip, grew sweet.
The well shone with the splendor his fair cheek shed,
Like the face of the earth with the moon o'erhead.
The fragrance that breathed from his flowing hair
Purged of its poison the deadly air,
And snakes and venomous creatures fled
From his radiant face and the light it spread.

A shirt in an amulet round him slung,
Which had saved his grandsire from the flame, was
hung ;
To Abraham sent by Rizvan,¹ when the flame
Like a garden of roses about him became.
From the Sidra tree Gabriel came in haste,
And the heavenly gift from his arm embraced.
The precious shirt from within he drew,
And o'er that pure body the garment threw.
Then spoke the angel : “ Lone mourner, see,

¹ Abraham was by the order of Nimrod thrown into the fire. He wore a silken shirt, sent to him from Heaven, and the flame turned into a bed of roses. The shirt was transmitted through Isaac and Jacob to Yusuf. Rizvan is the porter of Paradise.

The Eternal Himself sends a message to thee :
 ‘The day is nigh when I bring that band,
 Who in false-hearted malice thy death have planned,
 Before thy presence to bend and bow
 With hearts deeper wounded than thine is now.
 Then recall to thy brothers their crime and shame,
 But keep from their knowledge thy story and name.’”

The words of Gabriel cheered his heart,
 And bade his sorrow and pain depart.
 In calm content on the jutting stone
 He sate like a king on his royal throne,
 While the faithful angel, if grief should stir
 The heart of the boy, was a minister.

THE CARAVAN.

Blest was the lot of the caravan
 From which, when he thirsted at eve, a man
 From that well in the desert his bucket drew,
 And brought unburied the moon to view ;
 Which three days in the depth had been forced to
 dwell

Like the moon of Nakhshab¹ in Nakhshab’s well.

On the fourth bright morn when the Yusuf of day²
 Arose from the gulf where entombed he lay,
 There came by good fortune a caravan,
 Passing to Egypt from Midian.

¹ The “Veiled Prophet of Khorasan” is said to have caused a luminous body like the moon to rise out of a well at Nakhshab in Turkestan.

² The sun.

By the weary length of the way distressed
They halted there and unloaded to rest.
High fate was theirs to have wandered far
And found Yusuf himself for a guiding star.
The weary merchants halted, and first
To the well they hastened to quench their thirst.
Happy was he who most speedily pressed
To that Water of Life and outstripped the rest,
And, a second Khizar¹ of high renown,
Sent through the darkness his bucket down.
Then Gabriel called to Yusuf, "Shed
The water of grace on the world," he said.
"Take thy seat in the bucket a brighter sun,
And from west to east in thy swift course run.
Thine horizon shall be the well's circular brim,
And shall ne'er, while thou shinest, be dark or dim.
Send forth a beam from thy face, and through
The whole wide world light shall shine anew."
Then Yusuf sprang from the stone, and fleet
As water took in the bucket his seat.
A strong man drew it, one skilled to say
What the water he drew from a well should weigh.
"What may there be in the bucket beside
The water that makes it so heavy?" he cried.
When that moon appeared, from his happy soul
Burst a cry of rapture beyond control:
 "O joy, that so lovely a moon to illume
The world should arise from the depth of gloom,

¹ The prophet Khizar, or Elijah, is the guardian of the Water of Life.

And out of the bitterest spring a stream
Of light and glory should suddenly gleam ! ”

So for him grew a rose in that desolate spot ;
But he to his fellows revealed it not.

To the place where he rested the youth he bare,
And gave him in charge to his people there.
Unworthy his lot is the man, unwise,
Who hides not his treasure from envious eyes.

But the brothers had lingered not far from the well,
And they burned in their hearts to know what befell ;
They saw the merchants arrive and stood
Waiting for news in the neighborhood.
To Yusuf they called with a secret cry,
But a hollow echo came back in reply.
To the caravan with quick steps, intent
On claiming the boy as their slave, they went,
And with toil and labor they made their way
Within the ring where the merchants lay.
“ This is our slave,” as they touched him, they cried ;
“ The collar of service his hand has untied.
The bonds of his duty were loosened, and he
From the yoke of his masters has dared to flee.
Though born in our house we will gladly sell
The idle boy who will never do well.
When a slave is negligent, idle, perverse,
Ever growing from bad to worse,
‘ Tis better to sell him, though small the price,
Than suffer still from his rooted vice.
We will labor no more to improve the wretch,
But sell him at once for the price he may fetch.”

He was sold for a trifle to him whose cord
Had brought him up to the light restored.
Malik — so named was the merchant — gave
A few pieces for Yusuf as household slave.
Then the traders arising their march renewed,
And onward to Egypt their way pursued.

Woe unto those who that treasure sold,
And bartered their souls for some paltry gold !
No life, nor the treasures of Egypt, could buy
One word from his lip or one glance from his eye.
Only Jacob his sire and Zulaikha, the true,
The priceless worth of that treasure knew.
But his worth was unknown to those blinded eyes,
And they took a few pence for the blessed prize.

THE KING.

Thus Malik gained with no labor the prize
That fell to his fortunate merchandise.
Such joy in the sight of his purchase he found
That scarcely his foot seemed to touch the ground.
With the hope that was in him his heart was gay,
And with double marches he sped on his way.

Ere to the city of Memphis he came,
The story was bruited abroad by fame :
“ Malik returns from his journey this morn
With a slave of the race of the Hebrews born :
A moon in the zenith of beauty, above
All others a king in the realm of love.
In the picture-house of the earth the skies

Have not seen his peer with their thousand eyes.”
 The King of Egypt the rumor heard,
 And the heart within him was strangely stirred :
 “Is not Egypt the garden of beauty? Where
 Can the eye see roses so bright and fair?
 The roses of heaven would droop from their stem
 And hide their shamed heads in the dust before them.”
 Then he cried in haste to the Grand Vizir :

“ Go, meet the merchants whose train is near,
 Go forth this moon of rare beauty to see,
 And lead him straight to my court with thee.”

The noble obeyed ; the merchants he met,
 And his eyes on that joy of the soul were set.
 At the sight of that beauty his senses fled,
 And he fain would lie down in obeisance his head.
 But Yusuf raised him as lowly he bent,
 And chid the obeisance he might not prevent :
 “ Bow down thy head to none living beside
 Him who set that head on thy neck,” he cried.

He called for Malik and bade him bring
 The beautiful slave to the court of the king.
 But Malik answered : “ We thought not yet
 In the monarch’s palace our feet to set.
 We are weary and worn with the length of the way,
 And crave of thy kindness some rest and delay.
 With wakeful nights and with hunger distressed
 We need three days to recruit and rest.
 We will wash off the dust, and refreshed after toil,
 Will wait on the king without spot and soil.”

The Grand Vizir gave his ready consent,

And again to the king and his duties went.
Of the beauty of Yusuf he spoke but a word,
Yet the king's jealous heart at the story was stirred.
He gave command, and they picked and chose,
As ye cull from a rose-bed each fairest rose,
The most beautiful boys that the land possessed,
In the kingdom of beauty kings over the rest :
With dainty caps bright with glittering gold,
And shawls of brocade round their shoulders to fold :
With a jewelled girdle round each fine waist,
And gay lips sweeter than sugar to taste ;
That when Yusuf's owner should spread the tale
Of his marvellous beauty, and bring him for sale,
They to the market should come and display
Their fair forms and features in rival array.
Then were he the sun, their more beauty would dim
His splendor, and chill the demand for him.

THE BATH.

Past were the promised three days, and on
The blue heaven of the Nile¹ the sun Yusuf shone.
“O world-adorner,” said Malik, “awhile
Light with thy splendor the bank of the Nile.
Bathe in the stream, and the waters shall flee
More bright with the dust they shall borrow from thee.”

That sun of beauty the order obeyed :
Alone on the bank of the flood he strayed.

¹ The Persian word *nīl* signifies both “blue” and “Nile.” Jami frequently plays upon the two meanings of the word.

His cap of bright gold he removed from his head,
 And his raven locks to the sun dispread ;
 He threw off his robe, and his limbs were bare
 Like the moon that shines through the cloudless air ;
 And his neck and shoulders were tinged with a flush
 Like the first faint hue of the morning's blush.
 A bathing-robe round his waist he tied,
 And the cypress of silver hung o'er the stream's side.
 The voice of the heavens cried : " Blest, O blest
 Is the bank of the Nile which his feet have pressed.
 Ah, if in the place of the flood I might kiss
 Those delicate feet, how supreme were the bliss !
 Nay, the sun would bend down from his noonday
 height,
 And give the glad waters his fountain of light.
 Yet he heeds not that fountain of splendor, but laves
 The dust from his limbs in the turbid waves."

He entered the river, awhile to shine
 In the stream like the sun in the Watery Sign.
 He dipped the fair face that was bright as a sun,
 As the lotus dips where the sweet waters run.
 He struck the waves with each naked limb,
 And the waters lived at the touch of him.
 He loosened the chains of his hair while the fleet
 Stream made a chain for his silver feet,
 And to capture the spoil of the river he set
 From the moon to the Fish¹ a fine amber-sweet net.

¹ That is, from above the earth to under it, with an allusion also to the fish in the river. The earth is said to rest on Gau or the Bull, and Gau on Mahi or the Fish.

Now a stream from his hand on his beautiful head,
Like the Pleiades decking the moon, was shed.
Now he rubbed the rose where the big drops lay,
Now combed with his fingers the spikenard spray.¹
Then pure from all dust of the journey he
Rose up on the bank like a cypress-tree.
Then he put on his raiment : the rose of his skin
Was enhanced by the white of the jessamine.²
About his body his coat he drew,
Worked with fine fancy of many a hue.
A gold-bright cap on his brow he placed,
And girt with a zone rich with jewels his waist.
Loose hung his ambrosial tresses, and lent
To the breezes of Egypt the breath of their scent.

Again in his litter the youth was placed,
And they drove to the court of the king in haste.
There in front of the palace gate
High on a throne was the king in state,
And the fairest boys of the realm stood near
Expecting when Yusuf himself should appear,
And a thousand eyes to the litter flew
As near to the throne of the king it drew.
It chanced the clouds in their dense array
Hid the light of the sun that day.
Then Malik gave order to Yusuf : “ Spring
From the litter and come to the throne of the king.
Cast the veil from thy face, for a sun art thou,
And the world shall be gay with the light of thy brow.”

¹ His hair.

² His shirt.

He spoke ; and the lovely boy sprang to the ground,
And shot sunlike rays on the circle round.

" 'Tis the blessed sun," thought the wondering crowd,
" That has come from the screen of his dark blue
cloud."

But they turned their eyes to the sun, and knew
It was not his rays that the splendor threw,
For the dark cloud still o'er the sun was spread.
And the face of Yusuf the radiance shed.

They clapped their hands, and on every side
Rose up a murmur of voices that cried :

" What, O Heaven, is the brilliant star
Outshining the sun and the moon by far?"
And the darlings of Egypt looked down disgraced
As they saw their beauty by his effaced.
When the sun shines forth in his splendor, where
Is the faintest star in the Lesser Bear?

RECOGNITION.

Ne'er had it entered Zulaikha's heart
That one stage kept herself and her darling apart.
But a secret impulse at work in her breast
Filled her with longing and wild unrest.
She strove to calm it, and knew not whence
Came the hidden yearning that moved each sense.
She roamed in the meadow for change and relief,
For the house seemed a dungeon of care and grief.
But still each day was weary and slow,
And she gnashed her teeth in her depth of woe.

She gathered all luxuries round her in vain,
For each moment that passed but increased her pain.
Her fountain of tears was outwept, and her mind
To change once more and to home inclined.
Again in her litter the lady lay
And hastened back on her homeward way.
On her journey homeward Zulaikha sped,
And her road by the gate of the palace led.
And she asked, as the press of people she viewed,
If Doomsday had gathered the multitude.
One made answer and said to her : " Nay,
A youth from Canaan is here to-day :
No slave is he, but a splendid sun,
In the kingdom of beauty the brightest one."

She raised the curtain, her glances fell
On the form and features she knew so well.
A long sigh burst from her heart as she lay
Back in her litter, her senses astray.
Home with their lady the servants pressed ;
In her secret chamber they laid her to rest.
Again the light in her sad eyes burned,
And her senses, lost in her swoon, returned.
" Say, light of my soul," cried the nurse, " say why
From thy troubled breast came that bitter sigh.
What reft thy senses away ? What woes
Made thy sweet lips with a cry unclose ?"
" Dear mother," she said, " what reply can I make ?
At each word I say must my bosom ache.
Thou sawest that youth in the midst of the press,
While the people were praising his loveliness.

It is he, my beloved, so long adored,
My life and my treasure, my love and my lord,
Whose face in my vision I saw when my soul,
Lured by his splendor, burst forth from control ;
For whom body and soul burnt with feverous flame,
For whom tears of blood from these fountains came ;
Whose dear love led me to this far land
When I came to this city to yield him my hand.
By him from my home and my friends was I torn,
And left amid strangers unfriended, forlorn.
The pangs thou hast witnessed, the long weary sighs,
The woes that have banished all rest from mine eyes,
For him all these sorrows were suffered, for him
My heart was heavy, mine eyes were dim.
I know not what grief has assailed me to-day,
But my woes in my breast like a mountain weigh.
What court as a king does my fair moon grace ?
What chamber is blest with the light of his face ?
Whose eye takes the splendor his glances shed ?
And whose house does he turn to a sweet rose-bed ?
Who wins from those fresh lips a life-giving kiss
And beneath the fair cypress reposes in bliss ?
Whose fingers the braid of his tresses entwine ?
Who joys in the shade of that palm to recline ?
Who would give all her treasure to purchase the prize
And make dust for his feet of the tint of her eyes ? ”
When the loving nurse saw whence the fierce passion
came,
She wept like a candle that melts with the flame.
She said : “ Lamp of beauty, hide, hide this fire ;

Conceal thy longing and sweet desire.
Long hast thou suffered in patience thy woe :
This day, too, endeavor like patience to show.
For hope from thy patience at length may arise,
And thy sun may burst forth from the cloud where he
lies."

THE SLAVE-MARKET.

Blest is the time, of all hours most sweet,
When two fond lovers, long parted, meet.
When love's touch burns with a steady ray,
And the pangs of longing have passed away.

The beauty of Yusuf so charmed each eye
That thousands of Memphis came round to buy.
Each one his costliest treasure sold,
And ran to the mart with the ready gold.
They say an old crone for his beauty sighed :
She caught up a handful of yarn and cried :
"No gold or silver to show have I,
But this will admit me with those who would buy."

The crier shouted : "Come, listen to me.
Who would purchase a slave from all blemish free ?
The first dawnings of grace on his young cheek shine,
And his lip is a ruby from beauty's mine.
High wisdom's stamp on his brow is impressed,
And the gentle virtues have filled his breast.
He speaks no word but the truth alone,
And fraud and falsehood to him are unknown."

The first who spoke in the dense array

A bag of red gold for the boy would pay :
A bag containing, all duly told,
A thousand coins of the finest gold.
Then others on horseback the market sought,
And a hundred bags, each of like value, brought.
Another outbid them all and would pay
As much fine musk as the boy might weigh.
Another priced him at higher rate
And offered in ruby and pearl his weight.
Thus each tendered his wealth in store,
And the price of Yusuf rose more and more.
Zulaikha was aware of the strife and stir,
And the highest offer was doubled by her.
Their lips were closed, and their faces blank,
As low on the knee of despair they sank.
To the Grand Vizir in her haste she spake :
“The price of the slave to his owner take.”
He answered : “The musk and the pearl and gold,
And all the wealth that my treasures hold,
Not half the price of the boy would be ;
And how can the ransom be paid by me ?”
She had a casket of jewels — nay,
A vault of heaven where the bright stars lay ;
And of all the gems of her treasure few
Were less valued than Egypt’s whole revenue.
“Take these jewels,” she cried, “O my soul’s dear
gem,
And pay the price of the boy with them.”
With fresh excuses he met her prayer :
“The king will buy him, a slave so fair,

And set over all, at his household's head,
A youth so true and so gently bred."

"Hasten," said she, "to the king, and all
Thy faithful care to his mind recall.
Say, 'Bar to my joy have I only one,
That mine eyes may look on no darling son.¹
Enhance my state by the boon I crave,
And leave me free to command the slave.' "

Zulaikha spoke, and her lord obeyed :
Before the king his request he laid.
Just was the plea, and the monarch bent
His ear to listen, and gave assent.
He gave him permission the slave to buy
And look on the boy with a father's eye.

He brought the youth to his home ; and she,
Zulaikha, at length from her grief was free.
Thus in a rapture the lady cried
As her eyes from the pearls of her joy she dried :
"Can it be real, this bliss supreme ?
Have I found my love, or is all a dream ?
Ne'er could I hope in the gloom of night
To look on the dawn of a day so white.
The moon of triumph her splendor shows :
Night has no sorrow and day no woes.
My gentle friend will my secrets share —
Thanks be to Heaven who has heard my prayer.
Who is blest like me in this world of grief,

¹ Zulaikha's nominal husband belonged to "that unhappy class which a practice of immemorial antiquity in the East excluded from the pleasures of love and from the hope of posterity."

When verdure revisits the faded leaf ?
 I gasped for water, but none was nigh :
 The sun was fierce and the sand was dry.
 From the cloud of grace came the gentle rain
 And bore the poor fish to her native main.
 I wandered lost in the gloom of night,
 My soul on my lips for toil and affright.
 A fair moon rose in the east and led
 My faint steps home with the light it shed.
 I lay on my bed, I was tortured with pain,
 With the lancet of Death in my heart's vital vein,
 When suddenly Khizar appeared in the room,
 And with Water of Life brought me back from the
 tomb.

Now thanks be to Heaven who has sent me my friend,
 And brought the long woes of my life to an end.
 A thousand lives be that noble heart's prize
 Who brought to the market such merchandise.
 If my jewels are gone, and I gain a rich mine
 Of jewels instead, shall I fondly repine !
 What are jewels and gems when compared with a soul ?
 He is welcome, whate'er they may be, to the whole.
 I recover my soul, and a few stones are lost :
 Whoe'er bought such a prize at so paltry a cost ?
 What does he gain by his traffic who sells
 The blessed Isa¹ for coral and shells ?²
 My coral and shells I have bartered away :
 But Isa the blessed is mine to-day.”

¹ Jesus.² Things of little worth.

She sifted these thoughts in the sieve of her soul,
And let pearls of tears from her glad eyes roll.
Now she thought of Yusuf but spoke no word,
Though her heart with the joy of his presence stirred,
Again she recounted the woes that were past,
And her soul rejoiced : he had come at last.

LOVE'S SERVICE.

When the prize to the net of Zulaikha came,
Heaven struck its coin in her happy name.
The care of Yusuf was now her task,
And no higher joy would the lady ask.
Silk embroidered with gold and brocade
To suit his stature her care arrayed.
Gold-wrought coronets, studded zones
Bright with the lustre of precious stones ;
For each day of the year a new dress to wear
She saw provided, and ceased from her care.
When the breath of morning was fresh with dew,
With a bright fresh robe to his side she flew.
When the Lord of the East with red gold was crowned,
With a new gold circlet his brow she bound.
Each day that the cypress upreared his pride,
In varied fashion his zone she tied,
Changed each morning that sunlight shone
Stealing the heart that it looked upon.
Never two days might the same crown press
The head of that cypress of loveliness.
Never, though sweet as the sugar-cane,

Might he wear the same girdle like it again.
With a thousand kisses she cried, as she set
On his temples a glittering coronet :
“ May the dust of thy feet be to me for a crown,
For a ladder to climb the tall height of renown ! ”
When over his shoulders his robe she drew,
She communed thus with the vest anew :
“ Oh, that this body of mine might be,
To cling to his body, one thread of thee ! ”
The shawl she folded about his breast
In amorous words like these was addressed :
“ Ah, how I long for that cypress-tree,
To be folded close to his heart like thee ! ”
When round his waist she adjusted the zone,
In these wild words was her passion shown :
“ Ah, that mine arms were that girdle to fold
The waist of my love in their clinging hold ! ”
When she combed the locks of his curling hair,
She found a balm for her sorrow there.
But ah, from its amber she wove and set,
To tangle her soul in its meshes, a net.
For breakfast and supper he might not leave
The lady’s chamber at morn and eve,
Ever supplied by her tender care
With varied dishes of daintiest fare.
Sweet sugar-candy his lips supplied,
And his teeth were the kernels that almonds hide.
The fairest fruit that the summer brings in
Was that silver apple, his rounded chin.
Now, like her heart as it burnt in the flame,

She gave him the breast of some wingèd game.
Now soft fruits which her care had dried,
Sweet as her lips were, her hand supplied.
She made him sherbet with sugar sweet ;
But a flush came o'er her and drops of heat.
Whate'er he might fancy, as swift as the thought
Of her own fond bosom, Zulaikha brought.
When the day was done and he fain would close
His weary eyelids in soft repose,
A coverlet dainty and gay was spread
O'er the silk and brocade of his sumptuous bed.
Covered with roses the young rose-spray
Pillowed on tulip and jessamine lay.
Then many a story with magic spell,
To clear the dust from his soul, would she tell.
When slumber a veil o'er his heavy eyes drew
She watched in her fever the whole night through,
Feeding the while on his beauty's lawn
Her pair of wild roes¹ till the light of dawn.
O'er his eyes like the sleeping narcissus she bent,
And inhaled with rapture the young bud's scent.
Now on a tulip her fingers would close,
Now from the rose-bed she gathered a rose.
Then she would look on his hair and say :
“ O hair beloved of grace's rose-spray,
Tears of blood from my sad eyes well
Because thou, a Dev, with a Peri wilt dwell ! ”²
Thus in her passion she made lament,

¹ Her eyes.

² Hair black as a Dev, with a face fair as a Peri's.

Till the long night, black as her hair, was spent.
 Ever busied in cares like these,
 Her day and night passed without rest or ease.
 Her constant thought to his wants she gave,
 And, queen of the house, was his humble slave.

Ah ! fond and weak is a lover, fain
 To toil that the loved one be spared a pain.
 If dust or a thorn in his love's path lie,
 He would sweep it away with the lash of his eye,
 And will wait with his soul in that eye for her
 To bend a kind look on her worshipper.

THE SHEPHERD.

Blest is the lover allowed by Fate
 About his beloved to serve and wait.
 All thought of himself to the wind is thrown,
 And his care and time are for her alone.
 Would she have his life ? At her feet it lies :
 He kisses the ground that she treads, and dies.
 Would she take his heart ? Straight that heart is filled
 With love's warm blood from his eyes distilled.
 His head is a foot when she bids him rise,
 And he deems her service a lordly prize.

Oft has a shepherd been known to claim,
 As the guard of religion, a prophet's name ;
 And stronger and stronger in Yusuf's heart
 Grew his rooted love for the shepherd's part.
 Soon as the wish of the boy she knew,
 The rein, as he guided, Zulaikha drew.

She ordered those skilled in the art to bring
For the use of her darling a dainty sling,
With gold like the sunlight, woven with care,
And bright as the threads of his fragrant hair.
Ah, how she longed in her heart that she
Herself one thread of the sling might be !
“ Mine arm round his body I may not twine,
But a touch of his hand would be surely mine.
But ah, can I wish with one single hair
To add to the weight which that hand must bear ? ”
Rarest gems in the sling she set,
And pearls such as made her own eyes so wet :
And the precious rubies a king would prize
Were as worthless stones in the lady’s eyes.
Then she bade the shepherds who fed their sheep
On the grassy plain and the mountain-steep
Choose from their flocks, like the Ram¹ that feeds
In the heavens, the best of the finest breeds —
Lambs fed on spikenard, like the roes of Cathay,
Whom the wolf had ne’er looked on to make his prey.
And Yusuf departed to shepherd these,
Like the spring sun entering Aries.
Like a young musk-deer alone, astray,
To the lambs in the valley he bent his way.
Zulaikha sent with her shepherd boy,
Like his faithful dog, her soul, patience, and joy,
And careful guardians about him, all
Charged to watch o’er him lest harm befall.

¹ The zodiacal sign Aries.

Thus, while he pleased, passed his days, and still
 He knew no guide but his own free will.
 He might feed his flock, if he chose, on the plain ;
 If he would, in the realm of a heart might reign.
 Yet still in his inmost nature he stood
 Aloof both from kingship and shepherdhood.¹

LOVE REPELLED.

He who gives his heart to a lovely form
 May look for no rest but a life of storm.
 If the gold of union be still his quest,
 With a fond vain dream love deludes his breast.
 As the passionate blood from his heart distils,
 He would see the form that his fancy fills.
 When his tearful eyes have obtained the grace,
 He longs for a kiss and a close embrace.
 If round his darling his arm he throws,
 The thoughts of parting renew his woes.
 Love may not lead us to perfect bliss :
 Life is not sweeter for love like this.
 From the secret grief of the soul it springs,
 And self-earned death is the end it brings.
 How should his days in sweet calm pass by
 Who must drink the blood of his heart or die ?

When on Yusuf, seen in her vision, as yet
 No waking eye had Zulaikha set,
 One wish alone in her heart might dwell, —

¹ That is, his nature was unchanged by external circumstances.

To look on the form which she loved so well.
When the sight of her darling had blessed her eyes,
Her bosom yearned for a sweeter prize,
And her loving arms round that form to wind
Was the longing thought of her heart and mind,
With a kiss on his ruby-red lips impressed,
By his arm encircled, to take her rest.
When a youth in the spring through a garden goes,
His heart marked like a tulip, for love of the rose,
First on its petals he looks with delight,
And then plucks the fair flower that has charmed his
sight.

With winning art would Zulaikha woo ;
But Yusuf far from her gaze withdrew.
Tears of hot blood would Zulaikha shed ;
But her tears were idle, for Yusuf fled.
Zulaikha's soul with deep wounds was scarred :
But the heart of Yusuf was cold and hard.
Still on his cheek would Zulaikha gaze ;
But Yusuf never his eye would raise.
For a glance from her darling Zulaikha burned ;
But Yusuf's look from her look was turned.
His eye he kept lest his heart might err,
And no fond glance would he bend on her.

What rest has the lover who pines alone,
If his darling's eye may not meet his own ?
He sheds his tears, and he heaves his sighs,
Hoping to gaze on his loved one's eyes.
If still those eyes to his love she close,
With the blood of his heart he must weep his woes.

When this heavy load on her bosom lay
Zulaikha wasted from day to day.
In the chilling autumn of pain and grief
The tulip banished the pink rose-leaf.
Under the weight of her sorrow she sank,
And the stately young cypress tree withered and shrank.
Gone was the splendor her lips had shed,
And the light that had shone from her cheek was dead.
Faint and weary she hardly through
Her long sweet tresses her fingers drew.
Scarce would she look at her mirror ; she
Kept her eyes bent down with her head on her knee.
No borrowed bloom on her cheek was spread,
For the blood that she wept from her heart was red.
The world about her was black, and why
Should she darken her orbs with the jetty dye ?
If under those lids the dark tint had lain,
The tears that she shed would have washed them again.
When Zulaikha's heart with her wound was torn
She rebuked her spirit with queenly scorn :
“Shame on thee ! Disgrace on thy name thou hast
brought
By love of the slave whom thy gold has bought.
A lady thou on a princely throne,
Wilt thou stoop to make love to a slave of thine own ?
The chains of thy love on a monarch fling :
A prince's daughter should love a king.
But of all that is strange 'tis most strange that he
Should shrink from love offered by one like thee.
If the dames of Memphis but knew thy shame,

Where were the end of their scorn and blame?"

Thus spoke Zulaikha ; but still she felt
That he alone in her fond heart dwelt.
Him she could not banish, but strove awhile
To charm her pain with this simple guile.

When the loved one possesses the lover's soul,
Can he tear himself free from her sweet control?
You may rend his heart from his body, yet
His faith to his love he will never forget.
The words of the love-stricken bard are true :
"Musk will keep its scent and the rose its hue.
And how may the lover have power to part
From the soul of his soul and the heart of his heart?"

THE MESSENGER.

In course of long sorrow Zulaikha knew
That her nurse was faithful and helpful and true.
"Thou hast served me often," 'twas thus she prayed ;
"Help me again, for I need thine aid.
To him as my messenger take thy way,
Be thou mine eloquent tongue, and say :
'Delicate plant, ever tended with care,
Lovely with blossom but wayward as fair ;
In the garden of beauty no cypress tree
Lifts up its head to compare with thee.
Moulded from spirit and soul was the clay
Wherein was planted thy Sidra-spray.
When the green leaves came on each growing bough,
They said : "The fairest of trees art thou."

Since the bride of Time was a mother, she
 Was never made glad by a child like thee.
 The eye of Adam was bright at thy birth,
 And the bloom of thy cheek made a rose-bed of earth.
 For none of the children of men is so fair ;
 No Peri has beauty with thine to compare.
 If thy loveliness shamed not the Peris, why
 Should they hide in a corner when thou art nigh ?
 Angels enthroned in the heavenly height
 Bend their heads to the ground when thy face is in
 sight.

If, by favor of Heaven, so high is thy place,
 Have mercy and show thy poor captive grace.
 They say that Zulaikha is witchingly fair,
 But ah, she has fallen a prey to thy snare.
 She has carried from childhood the wound in her
 breast

Which for many long days has deprived her of rest.
 In three nightly visions thy face was shown,
 And no peace in her heart from that time has she
 known.

Now chained like the waves of the wind-rippled sea,
 Now roaming ere morn like the zephyr is she.
 She is worn by her sorrow as thin as a hair,
 And her longing for thee is her only care.
 All the gold of her life for thy sake has she spent ;
 Have pity at last : it is sweet to relent.
 Pure and fresh is the Water of Life on thy lip :
 What harm if a drop from the fountain she sip ?
 With full clusters laden, what harm to allow

One taste of the fruit that hangs ripe on the bough?
On thy ruby lip let her feed her fill,
And perhaps the wild storm of her breast will be still.
Let her pluck the dates from that palm-tree's height,
Or lay down her head where thy foot may light.
What wilt thou lose of thy rank, my king,
If thine eye one glance on thy servant fling?
In all the pride of her station, she
The least of thy handmaids would gladly be.' "

He heard the speech. In reply to the dame
From his ruby lips opened this answer came :
" Skilled in the secrets thou knowest so well,
Cheat not my soul with thy ravishing spell.
The slave of Zulaikha and bought with her gold,
My debt for her kindness can never be told.
To this stately mansion she raised my clay,
And nurtured my soul and my life each day.
If I counted her favors my whole life through,
I never could pay her the thanks that are due.
On the line of her pleasure my head I lay,
And I wait ever ready to serve and obey.
But warn her never to hope that I
My God's commandment will break and defy.
Ne'er let her tempt me in hope to win
The soul which I strive to keep pure from sin.
I am called his son by the Grand Vizir ;
He counts me true and my love sincere.
Shall I, the young bird whom his care has bred,
Bring shame on the house where I long have fed?
God in various natures has sown the seeds

Of divers wishes and thoughts and deeds.
 The pure in nature will fear disgrace ;
 But base are his actions whose birth is base.
 Can a dog be born of a woman ? Where
 Does barley wheat or wheat barley bear ?
 In my bosom the secrets of Jacob dwell,
 And my heart keeps the wisdom of Gabriel.
 Am I worthy of prophethood ? Well I know
 To holy Isaac that hope I owe.
 A rose am I and a secret I hold ;
 In Abraham's garden my petals unfold.
 May sin never drive me — forbid it, God ! —
 Aside from the path which my fathers trod.
 Bid Zulaikha spurn the wild thought, and free
 Her own kind heart from the sin, and me.
 My trust in the God whom I serve is sure
 To keep my life undefiled and pure."

EXCUSES.

The answer was brought to Zulaikha ; despair
 Made her senses as wild as her own wild hair.
 From her eye's black almond there came a flood
 Of thick tears mixed with her own heart's blood.
 She reared up her stately cypress, and flew
 Till its shade o'er the head of her darling she threw.
 "My head," she cried, "at thy feet shall be,
 But ne'er shall my breast from thy love be free.
 My love of thee throbs in each hair of my head :
 Self-thought and self-feeling are vanished and dead.

That vision of thee is my soul, and the snare
Of thy love is the collar which slave-like I wear.
Have I a soul? "Tis but longing for thee;
A body? Its spirit is hastening to flee.
But how of the state of my heart shall I speak?
"Tis one drop of the torrent that pours down my cheek.
In the whelming sea of thy love I drown:
Its waters rush o'er me and weigh me down.
When the leech with his lancet would ease my pain,
Love of thee, and not blood, gushes forth from the
vein."

Then Yusuf wept at her words. "Ah, why
Those tears?" said Zulaikha, and heaved a sigh.
"Thou art mine own very eye, and while
Tears of sorrow are dewing it how can I smile?
For each big drop from thine eye that flows,
A flame of fire in my bosom glows.
A miracle this of thy beauty, that turns
Water itself into flame that burns."

He saw her anguish, he heard her sighs,
And the tears flowed down from his lips and eyes:
"My heart is broken," he said, "when I see
How woe ever waits upon love of me.
My aunt's foolish love was my earliest grief,
For it made me appear to the world as a thief.
Loved by my father I still was unblest,
For envy grew fast in each brother's breast.
From his sight they banished his favored child,
And to Egypt's land have I come exiled.
And now must the heart in my bosom bleed

At the thought of the woe which thy love may breed.
 The Lord of lovers is jealous : He
 Will brook in His kingship no rivalry.
 He will have no partner to share His throne,
 But from first to last He will reign alone.
 Scarce may a cypress its proud top show
 Ere like a long shadow He lays it low.
 Scarce can the moon her full light display
 Ere scathed by His anger it fades away.
 Soon as the sun in the zenith shines
 The golden light to the west declines.”

Zulaikha answered : “ My lamp and eye,
 I need no moonlight when thou art nigh.
 If I may not be dear in thy sight, to be
 The least of thy slaves were enough for me.
 But canst thou not treat her in gentler mood,
 And free her from sorrows of servitude ?
 No outward sign will thy handmaid show,
 But her heart will long and her bosom glow.
 Why dost thou deem me a foe ? Thou art
 Dearer to me than mine own dear heart.
 And where is the fool who would add a care
 To double the load which his heart must bear ?
 What dost thou fear from my hate ? My heart
 By the sword of thy love has been cleft apart.
 Ah, kiss me ; the touch of thy lips will restore
 The rest of my soul that I sorrow no more.”
 “ Nay, my sweet mistress,” thus Yusuf replied :
 “ In duty’s bonds I am chained and tied.
 From the path of service I may not stray :

There thou commandest and I obey.
More than such duty forbear to claim ;
Make not thy love my dishonor and shame.
Assign me some labor that far from thy side
My days still for thee may be occupied.
Against thy light orders I will not rebel,
But remember thy bounties and serve thee well.
By faithful service a slave like me
Made glad by kindness at length is free.
True service rejoices a master ; but still
A slave he continues who serves him ill.”
“ Rare jewel,” she answered, “ compared with thee
The meanest slave’s rank were too high for me.
For each slight task, when my voice is heard,
A hundred servants obey my word.
Their ready service can I refuse,
And thee for the task or the message choose ?
The eye is counted of higher worth
Than the foot which is fashioned to tread the earth.
Thorns in the path of thy foot may lie,
But lay not upon them thy precious eye.”

Again said Yusuf: “ Dear lady, round
Whose heart the bands of my love are bound,
If thy love like the light of the morn be true,
Only my will must thou seek to do.
My wish is only to serve thee ; thou —
Or thou art no friend — must the wish allow.
To please the heart that he loves, a friend
Regards as his being’s true aim and end.
'Neath the foot of friendship his will he sets,

And self in the love of his friend forgets."

He spake in the hope that a task might bar
All converse with her and keep him afar.

He knew that her presence was trouble and fear :
In distance was safety, and woe to be near.
In fire and tempest the wool that flies
When it may not contend with the flame is wise.

FRESH COUNSEL.

Deep in despair was Zulaikha, slain
With the love of the boy whom she wooed in vain.
One night she summoned her nurse to her side,
Where gently she bade her be seated, and cried :
" Strength of this frame when my limbs are weak,
Lamp of my soul when thy light I seek,
Thy nursling owes thee each breath that she draws ;
If she lives, the sweet milk of thy love is the cause.
Love more than a mother's, too deep to be told,
Has raised me up to the rank I hold.
How long must I pine with my fond bosom scarred,
How long from that soul of the world be debarred?
Wilt thou not aid me, and tenderly guide
My feet to the harbor that still is denied ?
What profits it me that my palace walls hold
My friend and myself, if that friend is so cold ?
The lover, whose darling refuses to hear,
Is far from his love, though he seem to be near.
If spirit from spirit be still far away,
What fruit has the meeting of water and clay ? "

“ Sweet child of the Peris,” the nurse replied,
“ Though what were a Peri if set by thy side?
God gave thee thy beauty to steal from the wise
Their heart and their face with thy ravishing eyes.
If a painter of china thy form portrayed,
And hung in a temple the picture he made,
The very idols to life would spring,
And their souls be the slaves of so fair a thing.
On the mountain height if thy cheek were shown,
Love would throb and thrill in the hard flint stone.
When to the garden thy steps are led,
Each dry tree raises his amorous head.
Each fawn on the plains when thy form she spies,
Would sweep thee a path with the fringe of her eyes.
When the charm of thy lip dropping sugar is heard,
From river and sky come the fish and the bird.
Why art thou sad, when such beauty is thine?
Why yield to thy sorrow, and bitterly pine?
Shoot out from that eye but one arrow, and thou
Wilt conquer the boy with the bow of thy brow.
Coil but a lock of those tresses, his feet
Will be caught in that beautiful snare when you meet.”
“ How can I tell the cruel scorn,”
Zulaikha said, “ that I long have borne?
Can I show my beauty to one whose eye
Is bent on the ground when my step is nigh?
Were I the moon, he would turn away :
The sun, he would shrink from his golden ray.
If, his own eye’s apple, I lent him light,
Scarce would he welcome the boon of sight.

Ah ! if a glance on mine eye he would throw,
The pangs that I suffer perchance he might know.
Those griefs would find place in his heart ; but he
Would never languish for love like me.
"Tis not only his beauty that kills me ; no,
"Tis the cold, cold heart, where no spark will glow.
Ah ! if but a pang for my sake he had felt,
Thus with my lover I never had dealt."
"Thou whose beauty casts on the sun a shade"—
The nurse to her lady this answer made—
"I have wrought a plan, and I trust that rest
Will at length be thine from the thought in my breast.
Bring forth thy treasure stored up of old,
Lade a camel with silver, a mule with gold.
I will build a palace like Iram fair,
And a skilful painter shall labor there
To paint on the walls with seductive charms,
Zulaikha folded in Yusuf's arms.
If, for a moment, he visit the place,
He will see thee locked in his own embrace.
Then will he yearn for thy touch, and at length
The love of thy beauty will grow to its strength.
Soon will he yield with his senses on fire,
And naught will be left for thy heart to desire."

She heard the counsel : her heart was bold :
She brought forth the stores of her silver and gold ;
And her wealth, fond fancies therewith to build,
She gave to the nurse to be spent as she willed.

THE PALACE.

They who raised the dome of this story say
That the nurse, whom the plan of her brain made gay,
Called in a wise master, his aid to lend,
With a hundred arts at each finger's end ;
A skilled geometer, trained and tried,
Through the maze of the stars a most trusty guide.
He had learned his figures from Almagest,¹
And his problems were troubles to Euclid's rest.
If he found no compasses ready at hand,
Two fingers drew deftly the circle he planned,
And the lines that he wanted most straight and true
Without the help of a rule he drew.
He had mounted up to the seventh sphere,
And built in Saturn a belvedere.
If his hand but turned to the mason's saw,
The stone grew soft as the clay for awe.
When to architecture he turned his thought,
Wondrous and fair were the works he wrought.
The endless plain of the world on the space
Of his finger-nail he could truly trace,
And with heightened charm in the sketch he drew
The shape of a fairer creation grew.
There was life and soul in the drawing when
The lines were sketched by his artist pen.
If his fingers had graven a bird of stone,
It had risen up in the air and flown.

¹ Ptolemy's *Syntaxis Magna*, translated into Arabic under the title *Al Megiste*, about 800 A.D.

By the nurse's order his hand of gold
Began the work on the plan she told.
There was hope in the sheen of the polished walls,
And the dawn of bliss gleamed through the stately
halls.

The brightest marble adorned the floor,
And ivory shone on each ebony door.
Within the palace were chambers seven,
In number and sheen like the stories of heaven,
Pure and polished and fair to view,
Each wrought of stone of a different hue ;
The seventh, fair as the seventh sphere —
All words, all painting would fail me here —
Forty gold pillars upheld, inlaid
With jewels, and beasts and birds portrayed.
Against each column a musk-deer leant,
And stored in the gold was the precious scent ;
And peacocks wrought in pure gold displayed
Their jewelled plumes in the long colonnade.
But a special marvel, eclipsing them,
Was a shady tree with a silver stem.
Never a man might its like behold,
With leaves of turkois and boughs of gold.
On each branch was a bird, a wonder of skill,
With emerald wings and a ruby bill.

The painter there, to his orders true,
The forms of Zulaikha and Yusuf drew,
Like lovers both of one heart and mind,
With the arm of each round the other twined.
Like heaven was the ceiling, for wrought thereon

The sun and the moon in their glory shone.
In the prime of Spring on the walls outspread
To the wondering view was a bright rose-bed,
And the eye might mark in each narrow space
The rose-sprays twined in a close embrace.
Wherever the foot on the carpet stepped
Two lovely roses together slept.
Search through the palace, no spot was there
But showed a type of that beauteous pair.
Under the foot, overhead, and around,
An emblem of two happy lovers was found.
The love of Zulaikha still grew meanwhile,
And rose each day with the rising pile.
As the idol-house met her eager gaze,
With fiercer fire was her heart ablaze.
There thrills a new pang through the lover's breast
When he looks on the picture of her he loves best,
The fair lines of her features his woes recall,
And he sinks in his sorrow love's helpless thrall.

IN THE PALACE.

Zulaikha opened her hand and decked
The finished work of the Architect.
Tissue of gold on the floor was strown,
And its beauty enhanced with a golden throne.
Jewelled lamps on the walls were hung,
And odorous herbs were beneath them flung.
She gathered together all things most fair,
And unrolled the carpet of pleasure there.

But amid the charms of the sumptuous hall
She longed only for Yusuf, far dearer than all.
A heavenly palace is dark and dim
To a lover whose darling is far from him.

She would summon Yusuf, once more they would
meet :

She would set him high on a princely seat,
She would woo his beauty and win success
With her tender guile and her soft caress,
Or feed on his lips and beguile her care
With the tangled locks of the rebel's hair.
But to conquer his heart she would add a grace
To her peerless form and her perfect face.
Her beauty needed no art, and yet
A current stamp by its aid was set.
The rose of the garden is fair to view,
But lovelier still with her pearls of dew.

She freshened the tint of her roses and spread
A livelier hue where a bud was dead.
She darkened the line of her eyebrows, so
To curve the new moon to a full rainbow.
Her hair, like the musk of China, which fell
In long black tresses she braided well,
And the pink of her delicate neck between
The coils that hung over her shoulders was seen.
She prepared the spell of her witching eye,
And darkened the lid with the jetty dye.
She set here and there a dark spot on her cheek,
And these were the words that her looks would speak :
“ Thy face is so fair, love, that I at the view

Consume, heart and soul, like the seeds of the rue."¹
Her fingers deftly with henna she stained,
That his heart thereby might be caught and detained ;
But a painter colored her palm with care,
For with this a picture she hoped to snare.
The jujube's tint, on her filberts spread,
Spoke of tears of blood that her eyes had shed.
The fair new moon² of each delicate nail,
Came full into sight from the shrouding veil,
That the new moon³ of bliss might at length appear
And announce that the feast of her joy was near.
Beside her cheek was an earring set,
And a moon and a star in conjunction met.
Ah, might that meeting herself unite
With the moon of the Faith, the wide world's delight !
Across her bosom, like sweet flowers grown
To perfect beauty, a scarf was thrown.
Then she drew on a delicate smock and her skin
Filled with roses the folds of the jessamine,
Which looked to the eye like a stream that flows
Over a garden of tulip and rose,
A wondrous stream, of fine silver made,
Where two fishes⁴ at rest on two arms were laid.
On each wrist a fair bracelet shone to enfold
Each glittering fish with a collar of gold.
So by her cheek and her hand was it shown

¹ The seeds are black and are burnt as charms.

² The white of the nail.

³ The appearance of the new moon at the end of Ramazan, the Mussulman Lent, is eagerly looked for, as the long fast then ends.

⁴ Her long shapely hands.

That her charms from the moon to the Fish¹ were known.

Next the lady her form arrayed
In precious tissue of China brocade.
She shone so bright in that robe, Chinese
To her as an idol had bent their knees.
On her jet-black garner of hair was set,
Of pearl and gold mingled, a coronet.
No peacock, proud of his jewelled plumes,
Could move more bright through the splendid rooms.
She reckoned on conquest, for who could withstand
The charms seen in the mirror she held in her hand?
Those charms she assayed, and the mirror told
That the beauty she trusted was current gold.
As she thought of her treasures her joy rose high,
And nothing was wanting save one to buy.

She sent her maidens and bade them call
Yusuf to visit her new-built hall.
He came, bright, noble, and mild, like the sun
And the moon and Mercury joined in one.
No mixture of clay made his nature base,
And light, all light, were his brow and face.
One glance from that eye, and the world is aglow:
He speaks, and all nations his utterance know.

Zulaikha saw, and the flames rose high,
Like the spark that falls where the reeds are dry.
“ Purest of creatures, thou lamp to guide
The eyes of those who see best,” she cried.

¹ Her cheek is the moon above the earth, and her hand the Fish on which the earth rests.

"O servant faithful and prompt to obey,
High favor and grace should thy care repay.
Thy dutiful love I can never forget,
And my glory and pride is my collar of debt,
Come, and to-day will I labor to show
Some slight return for the debt I owe :
Nay, long in the record of time shall live
The meed I bestow and the thanks I give."

With gentle charm and resistless sway
To the first of the chambers she led the way.

Soon as the door of pure gold he passed,
With the lock of iron she closed it fast.
The door she closed, but the secret nursed
Deep in her heart from her lips outburst.
Thus she addressed him : " O thou, the whole
Wish and desire of my hungry soul,
Thy vision appeared in my dreams and beguiled
The sleep from mine eyes when I yet was a child.
That vision brought frenzy and anguish to dwell
Forever with me : I loved thee so well.
Ere yet I had seen thee, to find thee here
I came from my country and all that was dear.
A helpless exile I sat and grieved,
And no sweet comfort my woes relieved.
After long pain I was blest to behold
Thy face ; but hope fled, for thine eye was cold.
Look on me no longer with eyes so stern :
Oh, one word of love, one word, in return ! "

He bent his head as he answered : " Thou
To whose bidding a hundred high princes bow,

Release me from this sore burden of woe,
And freedom of heart on thy slave bestow.
Dear lady, longer I would not be
In this curtained chamber alone with thee,
For thou art a flame, and the wool is dry :
The wind art thou and the musk am I.
Is the wool secure when the flame burns fast ?
Should the musk be left to the boisterous blast ? ”
His eager words to the winds she threw :
To the second chamber the boy she drew.
Again she fastened the door : again
The heart of Yusuf was rent with pain.
She lifted the veil of the days gone by
And poured out her grief with a bitter cry :
“ How long wilt thou scorn me, Oh ! thou more sweet
Than my soul, and rebel when I fall at thy feet ?
I lavished my treasure to buy thee, I gave
My faith and my prudence to make thee my slave.
For I hoped in my heart that, pledged to obey,
Thou wouldest be my comfort and joy and stay.
But no order I give thee wilt thou fulfil,
And thou seekest each path save the path of my will.”
“ Sin is not obedience,” he answered ; “ shame
Ne’er may be linked with true duty’s name.
Each act defying the Master’s law
Is in true service a breach and flaw :
And never mine be the power or will
To break His law by a deed so ill.”
Onward from chamber to chamber they strayed,
And in each for a little their steps delayed.

New arts of temptation in each she plied,
In each new magic and charms were tried.
Through six of the rooms she had led him, still
She won not the game¹ though she played with skill.
Only the seventh was left : therein
Lay her strongest hope that at last she might win.
In this way was nothing of dark despair,
For black to her eyes seemed white and fair.
If no hope from a hundred doors appears,
Eat not thy heart nor give way to tears.
For yet one door thou mayst open and see
A way to the place where thou fain wouldest be.

FLIGHT.

These are the words of the bard who sings
This ancient story of mystic things.
To the seventh chamber their steps they bent,
And Zulaikha cried in her discontent :
“ Pass not this chamber unnoticed by,
And lay thy foot on this loving eye.”

He entered and sat where she bade him : again
She fastened the door with a golden chain.
No spy, no stranger might there intrude
To break the charm of the solitude.
’Twas made for the loved and the lover alone,
And the dread of the censor was there unknown.

¹ An allusion to the game of draughts, the Persian board containing six squares, and the game being called “ shashdar,” i.e., “ six-doored.”

The loved one's beauty was there more bright,
And the lover's heart sang a song of delight.
No more was the bosom's soft flame concealed,
And the spirit of love had a limitless field.

Full, eyes and heart, of the flame she fanned,
She seized in wild passion her darling's hand,
And with gentle magic of words most sweet,
Half led and half drew his slow steps to a seat.
She threw herself there by his side. Then broke
A flood of hot tears from her eyes, and she spoke :
“Look on me, look on me once, my sweet :
One tender glance from those eyes, I entreat.
Then if the sun saw my glad face, he
Moon-like might borrow new light from me.
How long wilt thou see my poor heart's distress?
How long will thy heart be so pitiless?”

She told her love, and her sorrow woke
With a pang renewed at each word she spoke.
But Yusuf looked not upon her : in dread
He lowered his eyes and bent his head.
As he looked on the ground in a whirl of thought
He saw his own form on the carpet wrought,
Where a bed was figured of silk and brocade,
And himself by the side of Zulaikha laid.
From the pictured carpet he looked in quest
Of a spot where his eye might, untroubled, rest.
He looked on the wall, on the door ; the pair
Of rose-lipped lovers was painted there.
He lifted his glance to the Lord of the skies :
That pair from the ceiling still met his eyes.

Then the heart of Yusuf would fain relent,
And a tender look on Zulaikha he bent,
While a thrill of hope through her bosom passed
That the blessed sun would shine forth at last.
The hot tears welled from her heart to her eyes,
And she poured out her voice in a storm of sighs :
“ List to my prayer, thou sweet rebel, and calm
The pangs of my heart with thy healing balm.
Thou art Life’s Water : these lips are dry ;
Thou art life forever : I faint and die.
As thirsty eyes when no water they see,
As the dead without hope, so am I without thee.
For many years has my heart in its love for thee bled.
And, fasting, outworn, I have tossed on my bed.
Oh, let me no longer in misery weep :
Give my body its food, give mine eyelids their sleep,
Oh, hear my entreaties : on thee I call
In the name of God who is Lord over all ;
By the excellent bloom of that cheek which He gave,
By that beauty which makes the whole world thy
slave ;
By the splendor that beams from thy beautiful brow
That bids the full moon to thy majesty bow ;
By the graceful gait of that cypress, by
The delicate bow that is bent o’er thine eye ;
By that arch of the temple devoted to prayer,
By each fine-woven mesh of the toils of thy hair ;
By that charming narcissus, that form arrayed
In the sheen and glory of silk brocade ;
By that secret thou callest a mouth, by the hair

Thou callest the waist of that body most fair ;
By the musky spots on thy cheek's pure rose,
By the smile of thy lips when those buds unclose ;
By my longing tears, by the sigh and groan
That rend my heart as I pine alone ;
By thine absence, a mountain too heavy to bear,
By my thousand fetters of grief and care ;
By the sovereign sway of my passion, by
My carelessness whether I live or die ;
Pity me, pity my love-lorn grief :
Loosen my fetters and grant relief :
An age has scorched me since over my soul
The soft sweet air of thy garden stole.
Be the balms of my wounds for a little ; shed
Sweet scent on the heart where the flowers are dead.
I hunger for thee till my whole frame is weak :
Oh, give me the food for my soul which I seek.”
“ Fair daughter,” said he, “ of the Peri race —
But no Peri can match thee in form or face —
Tempt me no more to a deed of shame,
Nor break the fair glass of a stainless name.
Drag not my skirts through the dust and mire,
Nor fill my veins with unholy fire.
By the Living God, the great Soul of all,
Inner and outward and great and small,
From whose ocean this world like a bubble rose,
And the sun by the flash of His splendor glows ;
By the holy line of my fathers, whence
I have learned the fair beauty of innocence ;
From whom I inherit my spirit’s light,

And through them is the star of my fortune bright ;
If thou wilt but leave me this day in peace,
And my troubled soul from this snare release,
Thou shalt see thy servant each wish obey,
And with faith unshaken thy grace repay.
The lips of thy darling to thine shall be pressed,
And the arms that thou lovest shall lull thee to rest.
Haste not too fast to the goal : delay
Is often more blessed than speed on the way,
And the first paltry capture is ever surpassed
By the nobler game that is netted at last."

Zulaikha answered : " Ah, never think
That the thirsty will wait for the morrow to drink.
My spirit has rushed to my lips, and how
Can I wait for the joy that I long for now?
My heart has no power to watch and wait
For the tender bliss that will come so late.
Thy pleading is weak, and no cause I see
Why thou shouldst not this moment be happy with me."

Then Yusuf answered : " Two things I fear —
The judgment of God, and the Grand Vizir.
If the master knew of the shameful deed,
With a hundred sorrows my heart would bleed.
Full well thou knowest my furious lord
Would strike me dead with his lifted sword.
And think of the shame that the sin would lay
On my guilty soul at the Judgment Day,
When the awful book is unclosed wherein
Recording angels have scored my sin."

" Fear not thy master," Zulaikha cried;

“At some high feast when I sit by his side,
A poisoned cup from this hand shall he take,
And sleep till Doomsday shall bid him wake.
And the God thou servest, I hear thee say,
Pardons His creatures who err and stray.
Still, their sole mistress, the keys I hold
Of a hundred vaults full of gems and gold.
All this will I give to atone for thy sin,
And thy God’s forgiveness will surely win.”

“Ne’er can my heart,” he made answer, “incline
To injure another by deed of mine ;
Least of all my lord, who with tender thought
Bade thee cherish and honor the slave he bought.
And will my God, whom no thanks can pay,
Take a bribe to pardon my sin to-day?
Shall the grace which a life cannot buy be sold
By the Living God for thy gems and gold?”

“O King,” she said, “to high fortune born,
May throne and crown be thine to adorn !
My soul is the mark of the arrows of pain,
And excuse on excuse thou hast marshalled in vain.
Crooked, contemptible, all unmeet
For a noble heart is the way of deceit.
God grant that my heart from deceit may be free,
And let me not hear these pretences from thee.
I am sorely troubled : oh, give me rest ;
Grant, willing, unwilling, this one request.
In words, idle words, have my days passed by,
And ne’er with my wishes wouldest thou comply.
A truce to pretences, or thou wilt repent

That thine eye would not glow nor thy heart relent.
A fierce flame has lighted the reeds of my heart ;
Thou canst look on the flame and stand heedless apart.
What boots it to burn in this flaine of desire,
If thine eyes be undimmed by the smoke of the fire ?
Come, pour a cool stream on the hot flame, if I
Fail to melt thy cold heart with the heat of a sigh,”
For new excuses his lips unclosed,
But with swift impatience she interposed :
“ My time thou hast stolen while fondly I hung
On the guiling words of thy Hebrew tongue.
No more evasion : my wish deny,
And by mine own hand will I surely die.
Unless thy warm arm round my neck I feel,
I will sever that neck with the biting steel.
If fondly around me thou wilt not cling,
A streak of my blood shall thy neck enring.
A lily-like dagger shall rend my side,
And my smock in blood like a rose shall be dyed.
Then shall my soul and my body part,
And thy guile no longer distress my heart.
My lifeless corse the Vizir will see,
And the crime of the murder will rest on thee.
Then under the earth, when the doom is passed,
Near this loving heart thou wilt lie at last.”
She drew from the pillow, distraught with grief,
A dagger gray as a willow leaf.
And, fierce with the fire of fever, laid
To her thirsty throat the bright cold blade.
Up sprang Yusuf ; his fingers’ hold

Circled her wrist like a bracelet of gold.
 “Master this passion, Zulaikha,” he cried ;
 “Turn from thy folly, oh, turn aside.
 Wilt thou not strive for the wished-for goal?
 Wilt thou abandon the aim of my soul?”
 She fancied his heart was relenting ; she thought
 His love would give her the bliss she sought.
 The gleaming steel on the ground she threw,
 And hope sprang up in her breast anew.
 She sugared his lip with a touch of her own :
 One arm was his collar and one his zone.

With a long sweet kiss on his lips she hung,
 And an eager arm round his neck was flung.

One nook of the chamber was dark with the shade
 Of a curtain that glittered with gold brocade.
 And Yusuf questioned her : “What or who
 Is behind the curtain concealed from view ? ”
 “It is he,” she answered, “to whom, while I live,
 My faithful service I still must give :
 A golden idol with jewelled eyes —
 A salver of musk in his bosom lies.
 I bend before him each hour of the day,
 And my head at his feet in due worship lay.
 Before his presence this screen I drew
 To be out of the reach of his darkened view.
 If I swerve from religion I would not be
 Where the angry eyes of my god may see.”
 And Yusuf cried with a bitter cry :
 “Not a mite of the gold of thy faith have I.
 Thine eye is abashed before those that are dead,

And shrinks from the sight of the lifeless in dread.
And God almighty shall I not fear,
Who liveth and seeth and ever is near?"

He ceased : from the fond dream of rapture he woke ;
From the arms of Zulaikha he struggled and broke.
With hasty feet from her side he sped,
And burst open each door on his way as he fled.
Bolt and bar from the stanchions he drew —
All open before him as onward he flew.
Of his lifted finger a key was made,
Which every lock at a sign obeyed.
But Zulaikha caught him, with steps more fast,
Or ever the farthest chamber he passed.
She clutched his skirt as he fled amain,
And the coat from his shoulder was rent in twain.
Reft of his garment he slipped from her hand
Like a bud from its sheath when the leaves expand.
She rent her robe in her anguish ; low
On the earth, like a shadow, she lay in her woe.
A bitter cry from her heart she sent,
And uttered these words in her wild lament :
" Ah, woe is me for my luckless fate !
He has left my heart empty and desolate.
Ah, that the game from my net should slip !
Ah, that the honey should mock my lip !
A spider once, I have heard them say,
Went forth in its hunger to hunt for prey.
On a bough a falcon had taken her stand,
Who had fled from her rest on a royal hand.
The spider would weave round her wings a snare

To hinder her flight through the fields of air.
 It labored long on this toil intent
 Till all the fine threads of its store were spent.
 At length the falcon her pinions spread,
 And the spider had naught but the broken thread.
 I am that spider : I weep and moan,
 The single hope of my heart o'erthrown.
 The vein of my heart is the broken thread,
 And the bird whom I hoped to ensnare is fled.
 Each tie to my life is now broken in twain,
 And the severed ends in my hand remain.”

THE FALSE CHARGE.

The pen that has written this tale relates,
 That when Yusuf fled through the palace gates,
 Soon as his foot in the court was set,
 The Grand Vizir and his lords he met.
 The master looked on his troubled face
 And questioned him wherefore he fled apace.
 Yusuf was ready with apt reply,
 And with courteous words put the question by.
 The Grand Vizir took his hand in his own,
 And they came where Zulaikha sat brooding alone,
 She saw them together, and cried, dismayed,
 To her own sad spirit, “ Betrayed ! betrayed !”
 Moved by the fancy, in loud lament,
 The veil of the secret she raised and rent :
 “ O Balance of Justice, what sentence is due
 To him who to folly thy wife would woo ?

And, false to his duty, has plotted within
The folds of his treason a deed of sin?"

"Speak, fairest one, speak : let thy tale be clear.
Who has thus dared?" said the Grand Vizir.

"The Hebrew servant," she cried, "has done
This thing, whom thy favor hast made a son.
Freed from the trouble and toil of the day,
Here in my chamber asleep I lay,
He came to the bed where alone I repose,
And would pluck the flower of the spotless rose ;
But the hand of the robber my slumber broke,
With a start and a cry from my rest I woke.
He started in fear when I raised my head,
And swift to the door of the chamber fled.
He fled amain, but I followed fast
And caught him ere yet from the palace he passed.
I caught his garment, my strength outspent,
And it split as the leaf of a rose is rent.
The garment he wears on his shoulders view,
And see that the words which I speak are true.
Now were it best for a little time
To send him to prison to mourn his crime ;
Or let the sharp lash on his tender skin
Cure the wild boy of his wish to sin.
Let the scourge be heavy, the pain severe,
That others in time may be warned and fear."

The Grand Vizir in amazement heard :
His visage changed and his heart was stirred,
From the path of justice he turned aside,
And his tongue was a sword of rebuke as he cried :

“ Treasures of pearl and of gold I gave,
 When I weighed out my jewels to purchase my slave.
 I made thee my son of mine own free grace,
 And gave thee beside me an honored place.
 I gave thee Zukaikha for guardian to tend
 Thy youth with her maidens and be thy friend.
 The slaves of my household obeyed thy will ;
 They were gentle in speech and ne'er wished thee ill.
 I made thee lord over all that I had,
 And never would suffer thy heart to be sad.
 A folly and sin was this thought of thine :
 May God forgive thee the base design.
 In this evil world, full of grief and woe,
 Kindness responsive to kindness we owe.
 But thou, all my love and my trust betrayed,
 My tender affection with ill hast repaid.
 Thou hast broken the bond which the meal had tied,
 And the pledge which the salt had sanctified.”

At the wrathful words of the Grand Vizir
 He shrank like a hair when the flame is near.
 He cried to his master : “ How long, how long
 Wilt thou burden the guiltless with cruel wrong ?
 False is the tale that Zulaikha has told :
 Her lie is a lamp when the flame is cold.
 From the man’s left side came the woman. Who
 Will hope that the left will be right and true ?
 From the day Zulaikha beheld me first,
 A frantic passion her heart has nursed.
 About me ever she comes and goes,
 And with soft allurement her fancy shows.

But ne'er have I lifted mine eye to her face,
Ne'er have I looked for a kiss or embrace.
Who am I, thy servant, that I should be
The tempter of her who is sacred to thee?
From earthly wealth I had turned away,
To the pangs of exile my heart was a prey.
A word from Zulaikha bade doors unclose,
And opened a way to a hundred woes.
She called me hither—her spells were sweet—
And drew me aside to this lone retreat.
With passionate pleading her love she pressed,
And made my bosom a stranger to rest.
By many a bar for a while detained,
The gate of the palace at length I gained.
She followed fast as I fled, and tore
Behind from the shoulder the coat I wore.
This is the story I have to tell :
This, only this and no more, befell.
If thou wilt not believe I am free from guilt,
In the name of Allah do what thou wilt."

Zulaikha heard, and in self-defence
Called Heaven to witness her innocence.
She swore an oath on each sacred thing,
By the throne, and the crown, and the head of the king,
By the rank and state of the Grand Vizir
Whom the monarch honored and held so dear.

When trouble and doubt in a suit arise,
An oath the place of a witness supplies.
But ah, how oft, when the truth is known,
Has the shameless lie of that oath been shown !

Then she cried, as her tears in a torrent ran :
 “ From Yusuf only the folly began.”

Tears, ever ready to flow, supply
 Oil for the lamp of a woman’s lie.
 Fed with this oil the flame waxes in power
 And destroys a whole world in one little hour.

The oath of Zulaikha, the sob, the tear,
 Shut the blinded eye of the Grand Vizir.
 He gave a sergeant his order, like
 The strings of a lute the boy’s heart to strike,
 That the vein of his soul might be racked with pain,
 And no trace of compassion or mercy remain ;
 That the boy should be lodged in the prison till
 They had thoroughly fathomed the secret ill.

THE INFANT WITNESS.

His hand on Yusuf the sergeant laid,
 And straight to the prison his way he made.
 The heart of the captive with woe was rent,
 And the eye of complaint on the sky he bent :
 “ Thou who knowest all hearts,” he cried,
 “ And every secret which men would hide ;
 Who discernest the true from the false, whose might
 Save Thine only can bring this secret to light ?
 Since the lamp of truth in thy heart Thou hast placed,
 Let me not with the charge of a lie be disgraced.
 Bear witness against mine accuser, I pray,
 That my truth may be clear as the light of day.”

He spoke in his sorrow ; and straight to its aim

The shaft of his prayer from his spirit came.
In the court was a dame, to Zulaikha allied,
Who was night and day by Zulaikha's side.
With her babe on her bosom but three months old
She seemed her own soul in her arms to hold.
No line in the volume of life had it read,
And its tongue like a lily's no word had said.
But it cried : "Vizir, be thy judgment more slow,
And beware of the haste that will end in woe.
No stain of sin upon Yusuf lies,
But he merits the grace of thy favoring eyes."

In courteous words spake the Grand Vizir
In reply to the speech which he marvelled to hear :
"O thou whom God teaches to speak while yet
With the milk of thy mother thy lips are wet,
Speak clearly and say who lighted the flame
That has threatened the screen of my honor and fame."
"No informer am I," said the babe, "to reveal
The secret another would fain conceal.
The tell-tale musk is so black in its hue,
For no folds will imprison the scent that steals through ;
And the screen of the petals that round her cling,
Gives a charm to the smile of the rose in Spring.
No secret I utter, no tale I tell,
But I give thee a hint which will serve thee well.
Go hence to Yusuf ; examine and note,
As he lies in the prison, the rent in his coat.
If the rent in the front of the garment appear,
The skirt of Zulaikha from soil is clear.
There is then no light in the charge he brings,

And the stain of a lie to his story clings.
 But if rent be the back of the garment, he
 From charge of falsehood and slander is free.
 Then faithless Zulaikha has turned aside
 From the path of truth and has basely lied."

The Grand Vizir to the prison went,
 And summoned Yusuf, to view the rent.
 He saw that the garment was torn behind ;
 And he cried to that woman of evil mind :
 " Thou hast forged a lie, and thine art has sent
 The innocent boy to imprisonment.
 What hast thou gained by thy crafty toils
 Since the shame of thy deed on thyself recoils ?
 Thou hast left the straight path and hast sullied thy
 name,
 By wooing thy slave to a deed of shame,
 From the path of honor thy feet have strayed,
 And on him the guilt of thy sin thou hast laid.
 The arts and wiles of a woman rend
 The heart of a man, and they never will end.
 Those who are noble they bring to naught,
 And the wisest hearts in their toils are caught.
 O that men from the plague of their arts were free !
 O that treacherous woman might cease to be !
 Begone : on thy knees in repentance fall,
 And pray for forgiveness, thy face to the wall.
 Let the tears of contrition thy penitence grace,
 And the blot from thy volume of life efface.
 And, Yusuf, set on thy lips a seal :
 This tale of dishonor to none reveal.

Enough that thy speech — for thy words were wise —
Has shown thee guiltless and opened mine eyes."

He spoke ; then he turned from the prison : and
food

For tale and jest was his clement mood.

Ah yes ; it is good to forgive and forget ;

But bounds e'en to mercy itself should be set.

If the man be too mild when the woman sins,

There ends good-nature, and folly begins.

Too patient a part, should thy wife offend,

Makes a rift in thine honor which naught can mend.

THE WOMEN OF MEMPHIS.

Love is ill suited with peace and rest :

Scorn and reproaches become him best.

Rebuke gives strength to his tongue, and blame

Wakes the dull spark to a brighter flame.

Blame is the censor of Love's bazaar :

It suffers no rust the pure splendor to mar.

Blame is the whip whose impending blow

Speeds the willing lover and wakes the slow ;

And the weary steed who can hardly crawl

Is swift of foot when reproaches fall.

When the rose of the secret had opened and blown,

The voice of reproach was a bulbul in tone.¹

The women of Memphis, who heard the tale first,

The whispered slander received and nursed.

¹ An allusion to the bulbul's love of the rose, whose beauty he sings.

Then, attacking Zulaikha for right and wrong,
Their uttered reproaches were loud and long :
“ Heedless of honor and name she gave
The love of her heart to the Hebrew slave,
Who lies so deep in her soul enshrined
That to sense and religion her eyes are blind.
She loves her servant. “Tis strange to think
That erring folly so low can sink ;
But stranger still that the slave she wooes
Should scorn her suit and her love refuse.
His cold eye to hers he never will raise ;
He never will walk in the path where she strays.
He stops if before him her form he sees ;
If she lingers a moment he turns and flees.
When her lifted veil leaves her cheek exposed,
With the stud of his eyelash his eye is closed.
If she weeps in her sorrow he laughs at her pain,
And closes each door that she opens in vain.
It may be that her form is not fair in his eyes,
And his cold heart refuses the proffered prize.
If once her beloved one sat with us
He would sit with us ever, not treat us thus.
Our sweet society never would he leave,
But joy unending would give and receive.
But not all have this gift in their hands : to enthrall
The heart they would win is not given to all.
There is many a woman, fair, good, and kind,
To whom never the heart of a man inclined ;
And many a Laili with soft black eye,
The tears of whose heart-blood are never dry.”

Zulaikha heard, and resentment woke
To punish the dames for the words they spoke.
She summoned them all from the city to share
A sumptuous feast which she bade prepare.
A delicate banquet meet for kings
Was spread with the choicest of dainty things.
Cups filled with sherbet of every hue
Shone as rifts in a cloud when the sun gleams through.
There were goblets of purest crystal filled
With wine and sweet odors with art distilled.
The golden cloth blazed like the sunlight ; a whole
Cluster of stars was each silver bowl.
From goblet and charger rare odors came ;
There was strength for the spirit and food for the frame.
All daintiest fare that your lip would taste,
From fish to fowl, on the cloth was placed.
It seemed that the fairest their teeth had lent
For almonds, their lips for the sugar sent.
A mimic palace rose fair to view
Of a thousand sweets of each varied hue,
Where instead of a carpet the floor was made
With bricks of candy and marmalade.
Fruit in profusion, of sorts most rare,
Piled in baskets, bloomed fresh and fair.
Those who looked on their soft transparency felt
That the delicate pulp would dissolve and melt.
Bands of boys and young maidens, fine
As mincing peacocks, were ranged in line ;
And the fair dames of Memphis, like Peris eyed,
In a ring on their couches sat side by side.

They tasted of all that they fancied, and each
Was courteous in manner and gentle in speech.

The feast was ended ; the cloth was raised,
And Zulaikha sweetly each lady praised.
Then she set, as she planned in her wily breast,
A knife and an orange beside each guest :
An orange, to purge the dark thoughts within
Each jaundiced heart with its golden skin.
One hand, as she bade them the orange clasped,
The knife in the other was firmly grasped.
Thus she addressed them : “ Dames fair and sweet,
Most lovely of all when the fairest meet,
Why should my pleasure your hearts annoy ?
Why blame me for loving my Hebrew boy ?
If your eyes with the light of his eyes were filled,
Each tongue that blames me were hushed and stilled.
I will bid him forth, if you all agree,
And bring him near for your eyes to see.”
“ This, even this,” cried each eager dame,
“ Is the dearest wish our hearts can frame.
Bid him come ; let us look on the lovely face
That shall stir our hearts with its youthful grace.
Already charmed, though our eyes never fell
On the youth we long for, we love him well.
These oranges still in our hands we hold,
To sweeten the spleen with their skins of gold.
But they please us not, for he is not here :
Let not one be cut till the boy appear.”

She sent the nurse to address him thus :
“ Come, free-waving cypress, come forth to us.

Let us worship the ground which thy dear feet press,
And bow down at the sight of thy loveliness.
Let our love-stricken hearts be thy chosen retreat,
And our eyes a soft carpet beneath thy feet."

But he came not forth, like a lingering rose
Which the spell of the charmer has failed to unclose.
Then Zulaikha flew to the house where he dwelt,
And in fond entreaty before him knelt :
" My darling, the light of these longing eyes,
Hope of my heart," thus she spoke with sighs,
" I fed on the hope which thy words had given :
But that hope from my breast by despair is driven
For thee have I forfeited all : my name
Through thee has been made a reproach and shame.
I have found no favor : thou wouldest not fling
One pitying look on so mean a thing.
Yet let not the women of Memphis see
That I am so hated and scorned by thee.
Come, sprinkle the salt of thy lip to cure
The wounds of my heart and the pain I endure.
Let the salt be sacred : repay the debt
Of the faithful love thou shouldst never forget."

The heart of Yusuf grew soft at the spell
Of her gentle words, for she charmed so well.
Swift as the wind from her knees she rose,
And decked him gay with the garb she chose.
Over his shoulders she drew with care,
The scented locks of his curling hair,
Like serpents of jet-black lustre seen
With their twisted coils where the grass is green.

A girdle gleaming with gold, round the waist
That itself was fine as a hair, she braced.
I marvel so dainty a waist could bear
The weight of the jewels that glittered there.
She girt his brow with bright gems ; each stone
Of wondrous beauty enhanced his own.
On his shoes were rubies and many a gem,
And pearls on the latchets that fastened them.
A scarf, on whose every thread was strung
A loving heart, on his arm was hung.
A golden ewer she gave him to hold,
And a maid brow-bound with a fillet of gold
In her hand a basin of silver bore,
And shadow-like moved as he walked before.
If a damsel had looked, she at once had resigned
All joy of her life, all the peace of her mind.
Too weak were my tongue if it tried to express
The charm of his wonderful loveliness.

Like a bed of roses in perfect bloom
That secret treasure appeared in the room.
The women of Memphis beheld him, and took
From that garden of glory the rose of a look.
One glance at his beauty o'erpowered each soul
And drew from their fingers the reins of control.
Each lady would cut through the orange she held,
As she gazed on that beauty unparalleled.
But she wounded her finger, so moved in her heart,
That she knew not her hand and the orange apart.
One made a pen of her finger, to write
On her soul his name who had ravished her sight—

A reed which, struck with the point of the knife,
Poured out a red flood from each joint in the strife.
One scored a calendar's lines in red
On the silver sheet of her palm outspread,
And each column, marked with the blood drops,
showed
Like a brook when the stream o'er the bank has
flowed.

When they saw that youth in his beauty's pride :
“ No mortal is he,” in amaze they cried.
“ No clay and water composed his frame,
But, a holy angel, from heaven he came.”
“ ‘Tis my peerless boy,” cried Zulaikha, “ long
For him have I suffered reproach and wrong.
I told him my love for him, called him the whole
Aim and desire of my heart and soul. . .
He looked on me coldly ; I bent not his will
To give me his love and my hope fulfil.
He still rebelled : I was forced to send
To prison the boy whom I could not bend.
In trouble and toil, under lock and chain,
He passed long days in affliction and pain.
But his spirit was tamed by the woe he felt,
And the heart that was hardened began to melt.
Keep your wild bird in a cage and see
How soon he forgets that he once was free.”

Of those who wounded their hands a part
Lost reason and patience, and mind and heart.
Too weak the sharp sword of his love to stay,
They gave up their souls ere they moved away.

The reason of others grew dark and dim,
 And madness possessed them for love of him.
 Bareheaded, barefooted, they fled amain,
 And the light that had vanished never kindled again.
 To some their senses at length returned,
 But their hearts were wounded, their bosoms burned.
 They were drunk with the cup which was full to the
 brim,
 And the birds of their hearts were ensnared by him.
 Nay, Yusuf's love was a mighty bowl
 With varied power to move the soul.
 One drank the wine till her senses reeled ;
 To another, life had no joy to yield ;
 One offered her soul his least wish to fulfil ;
 One dreamed of him ever, but mute and still.
 But only the woman to whom no share
 Of the wine was vouchsafed could be pitied there.

THREATS.

When many rivals compete, the prize
 Waxes more dear in the winner's eyes,
 When another loves the fair maid you seek,
 The love grows strong that before was weak,
 And the flame that languished bursts forth anew
 When eager rivals come near to sue.
 The flame fed afresh on Zulaikha's mind,
 And her heart more strongly to Yusuf inclined.
 Again she spoke to that lovely band,
 Whom love had wounded in heart and hand :

“ If ye think I had reason, forbear to chide
And blame me for love which I could not hide.
The door of friendship is open ; be
Friends in my trouble and prosper me.”

They swept the chords of love’s lute and raised
Their voices in tune and excused and praised.
“ Yes, he is lord of the realm of the soul ;
There his is the right and the sway and control.
What creature that looks — nay, even what stone —
On that lovely face, calls its heart its own ?
If thy love for him be thy sum of distress,
Thine excuse is sufficient, his loveliness.
Breathes there a mortal beneath the sky,
Who can look unmoved on that witching eye ?
The heaven has oft compassed the earth, but where
Has it seen a darling so bright and fair ?
Thou hast loved the sweet youth, but thou art not to
blame,
Thy soul is afire, but thy love is no shame.
May his strong heart touched by thy passion relent,
And shame make thy darling his coldness repent.”
They ceased. On Yusuf their eyes they bent,
And addressed him thus in admonishment :
“ Joy of the age, from the east to the west,
The fame of thy virtue by all is confessed.
This garden, where roses with thorns we see,
Has ne’er grown a rose without thorns like thee.
Stoop down for a little, and add a grace
To that height by descent from thy lofty place.
Zulaikha is dust for thy feet to tread,

Trail thy skirt for a while where that dust is spread.
How, O pure one ! wilt thou be hurt
By touching the dust for a time with thy skirt ?
One wish has Zulaikha : no longer refuse
To grant the sole favor for which she sues.
If thy wish be to have no desires of thine own,
Oh, leave not the thirsty to languish alone.
She has waited on thee, with thy wishes complied ;
Oh, let not the meed of her love be denied.
Regard her entreaties, no longer be coy,
For we fear in our hearts, O too beautiful boy,
If thou still wilt rebel and no warning wilt heed,
The fruit in the end will be bitter indeed.
She will wash out thy love from the depths of her
soul,
And a deluge of fury will over thee roll.
Beware, and remember love turned to hate,
Will press the old friend with the sorest weight.
When over the bank the fierce torrents burst,
The mother will tread on the child she nursed.
She threatens a prison. Beware, beware,
And think of the pains that await thee there.
'Tis narrow and dark like a tyrant's grave,
Far from it fly those who have lives to save ;
Where the foul air stifles the living breath,
Where wretches lie who are waiting for death,
The hand of the builder has fashioned there
No narrowest passage for light or air.
Plague is the gift which the close air brings,
And its floor is the soil whence misery springs.

The light of dawn never enters where
The door is closed with the key of despair.
Narrow and blacker than pitch, the chains
Are the only treasure the vault contains.
There without bread, without water, lie
The weary wretches who fain would die.
Warders watch over them, turn by turn,
And their eyes are fierce and their words are stern.
Now say, shall such an ill mansion be,
O heart-enslaver, a home for thee ?
Let not thy heart be so cruel ; spare
Thyself and open the door to her prayer.
Bend thy proud head as a reed is bent :
Banish all fear from thy heart, and consent.
Or if thy fancy perchance prefer
More winning beauty and turn from her,
To us in secret thy heart incline,
And be ours forever as we are thine.
See, in our charms we are matchless ; see,
Moons lighting the heaven of beauty are we.
Shame makes Zulaikha her own mouth close
When we open our lips whence the honey flows.
How can Zulaikha with us compare ?
So sweet are we and so bright and fair."

He heard the voice of the charmers, and knew
That their zeal for Zulaikha was all untrue.
They would lead him to swerve from his faith and err,
But more for the sake of themselves than of her.
His heart was troubled, he turned aside,
And no tender look to their looks replied.

He lifted to heaven his hands and prayed :
 “ O Thou who givest the needy aid,
 Friend of the humble recluse, the sure
 Help and refuge of all who are pure ;
 Against the oppressor a strong defence,
 The lamp and beacon of innocence ;
 Their wiles torment me. The bolt, the bar,
 The chains of the prison were better far.
 Years in a dungeon were lighter pain
 Than to look on the face of these women again.
 Thus our hearts grow blind that we cannot see,
 And we wander farther and farther from Thee.
 If Thou wilt not turn their devices aside
 Who have strayed from the path and their faith denied,
 Who will not permit me to rest and be free —
 If Thou wilt not aid me, ah, woe is me.”

For prison he prayed. Nor would God deny
 The boon he sought with his eager cry.
 But had Yusuf asked at His hands release,
 The boy unimprisoned had gone in peace.
 From the snares of the women the bird had flown,
 And the pains of the dungeon he ne’er had known.

IMPRISONMENT.

In vain they tempted him. No success,
 Had the art of each wily idolatress.
 The pure soul of Yusuf was still unmoved,
 Nay, firmer still by temptation proved.
 And like bats that flee ere the sun is bright,

They despaired of the joy of his beauty's light.

But they left not Zulaikha a moment's rest,
On her sorrowing soul their advice they pressed.
"Poor suffering creature," 'twas thus they cried,
"Unworthiest thou to be thus denied ;
No Houri's child is like Yusuf fair,
But he will not listen to grant thy prayer.
We gave him rebuke and advice enough,
And the file of our tongue we made sharp and rough.
But his heart is hard, and he will not feel ;
The file, though rough, would not bite the steel.
Let the forge — his prison — be heated, so
The stubborn iron will melt and glow.
When the metal grows soft in the flame, the skill
Of the smith can fashion its form at will.
If the softened iron thou canst not mould,
Why hammer in vain when the steel is cold ?"

She trusted the words that the charmers spoke,
And hope in her bosom again awoke.
She would prison the treasure her heart loved best,
And make him suffer that she might rest.
When love is not perfect, with one sole thought —
Himself — is the heart of the lover fraught.
He looks on his love as a charming toy,
The spring and source of his selfish joy.
One rose will he pluck from his love, and leave
A hundred thorns her lone heart to grieve.

As Zulaikha sat by her husband's side,
She poured out the rage of her soul and cried :
"This boy has brought me to grief and shame ;

The high and the humble reproach my name.
 Men and women the story tell,
 How I pine for the youth whom I love too well ;
 That I am the game he has struck with his dart,
 And laid on the ground with a bleeding heart.
 Barb upon barb in my breast, they say,
 Has drained the blood from the stricken prey ;
 No hair on my head from that love is free,
 And my very self is a stranger to me.
 To send him to prison and thus repel
 The growing slander, methinks, were well,
 And in every street of the town to proclaim
 By the voice of the crier the traitor's shame ;
 Thus shall be punished the slave who allows
 His eye to look on his master's spouse,
 And with lawless feet, on the carpet spread
 For the lord who owns him, presumes to tread.
 The tongue of reproach will be silent when
 My avenging wrath is made known to men."

The plan she spoke to his willing ear,
 Delighted the heart of the Grand Vizir.
 "I have pondered it long," was the answer he made ;
 "Long on my soul has the trouble weighed ;
 But I never have pierced a pearl so fine,
 Or devised a plan to compare with thine.
 The boy is thine own, as thou wilt, to treat ;
 Sweep thou the dust from the path of thy feet."

She heard his speech with a joyful smile,
 And she turned to Yusuf the rein of her guile :
 "O wish of my heart and desire of mine eyes,

The only treasure on earth I prize,
My lord's permission has left me free
To deal as my will may incline with thee.
Thy head, if I will, in a prison must lie,
Thy foot, if I order, will tread the sky.
Why still rebellious ? why still so blind ?
Bend thy proud spirit at last and be kind.
Oh, come, tread the path of agreement and peace ;
Me from torment, thyself from affliction, release.
Come, grant me my wish ; I with thine will comply ;
In the zenith of glory thy name shall be high.
Beware, beware, or the door will unclose
Of a prison fraught with a hundred woes ;
And to lie there in sorrow and chains will be
Less sweet than to sit and smile softly on me.”
He opened his lips in reply : but well
You know the answer I need not tell.
In Zulaikha’s bosom resentment woke,
And thus to the chief of the guard she spoke :
“Off with his robe and his cap of gold ;
In coarsest woollen his limbs enfold.
His silver with fetters of iron deck,
And bind the slave’s collar about his neck.
Guilty of crime, make him sit on an ass
And through every street of the city pass ;
And let a crier’s loud voice proclaim
That the treacherous servant, lost to shame,
Who dares on his master’s carpet to tread,
Shall thus with scorn to his prison be led.”
The multitude gathered on every side.

And "God forbid," in amaze they cried,
"That from one so fair should come evil deed —
The robber of hearts cause a heart to bleed.
Of the race of the angels he surely is one,
And no deeds of Satan by them are done.
No evil act will the lovely do,
For the sage has said, and his words are true :
'The fair in face are not soiled with sin ;
Less fair are their looks than their souls within.
But he who is hideous in form and face,
Has a heart in his breast that is yet more base.'
And we see the truth of the maxim still,
Ne'er the hideous do good nor the lovely ill."
Thus to the dungeon the boy was driven,
And there to the charge of the jailer given.
Within the prison the saint was led,
And life seemed to return to the corpse of the dead.
A cry of joy from the captives rose,
And happiness came to that house of woes ;
While all in rapture their fetters beat
As they saw the approach of his blessed feet.
None felt the chain that confined each limb,
The ring on his neck was no bond for him.
A rapturous joy was his gloomy fate,
And a mountain of woe was a straw in weight.
Wherever is one of the Houris' race
She makes a heaven of the dreariest place.
Where the loved one comes with her cheek of rose,
There a rose-bed is though a furnace glows.
When the glad commotion was hushed and still,

To the jailer Zulaikha declared her will :
“ Spare him : with kindness the captive treat ;
Strike the ring from his neck and the chain from his
feet.

Strip off the rough gown from his silver skin ;
Bring silken raiment to robe him in,
Wash the dust of toil from his head, and set
On his brows the bright round of a coronet.
A separate house for his rest prepare,
And lodge him apart from the others there.
The door and the walls with sweet scent perfume ;
Brighten each window and arch of his room ;
And over the floor be a carpet laid
Of silver tissue and gold brocade.”

Within the chamber the captive passed :
The carpet of prayer on the ground he cast,
And raised — for such was his wont each day —
His tranquil face to the arch to pray.
He joyed to have fled from the women’s snare,
And his burden was light for his heart to bear.
Woe never visits the world but it brings
Sweet scent of the coming of happier things ;
And the weary captive who lies in chains
Feels the breath of a blessing to lighten his pains.

REPENTANCE.

In this vault of turki’s upreared of old,
The children of Adam are dull and cold ;
Their hearts are never in thankful mood,

But their thoughts are still of ingratitude ;
 And the worth is unknown, till they fade away,
 Of the blessings which brighten each passing day.
 Though many a lover may nerve his heart,
 When he deems he is weary of love, to part,
 When the flame of absence is kindled by Doom
 His body will waste and his heart consume.
 The light that the rose-cheek of Yusuf shed
 Made the house of bondage a bright rose-bed ;
 But Zulaikha, whose palace had been more fair
 Than a garden of roses when he was there,
 Felt a deep gloom on her spirit press,
 When she saw not the light of his loveliness.
 Sad was her heart in that dungeon's hold,
 And one sorrow by parting became twofold.

Where is woe like the lover's who looks on the place
 Once blest with the light of his darling's face ?
 What comfort is found in the drear rose-bed,
 When the thorns are left and the roses are dead ?
 Ah, how the heart of the bulbul is torn —
 A roseless garden and spears of thorn !
 When her look on her desolate garden was bent,
 Like a bud unclosing her robe she rent.
 Why should the hand of the mourner refrain
 From tearing his robe in a torment of pain ?
 Let him rend through his bosom a way to his heart
 That comfort may enter and banish the smart.

* * * * *

Each thing he had touched, as it met her eye,
 Drew from her bosom a long deep sigh.

Sad was her soul, and her eyes were dim,
As she caught up the raiment once worn by him.
But the touch was to her as the breath of the rose,
And soothed the fierce pain of her burning woes.
About her own neck his collar she tied,
With a hundred kisses of love applied :
“This is my collar of glory, nay,
The band of my heart,” she would cry, “and its stay.”
To place her arm in his mantle’s sleeve
Would for a moment her pain relieve ;
As she thought of her love it was touched and kissed,
And with silver filled of her dainty wrist
She pressed to her eyes — and the touch was sweet —
The skirt that had lain on her darling’s feet,
And, hopeless to fasten her lips on them,
Deluded her soul with a kiss of the hem.
Pearl and ruby in showers she spread
Over the cap that had decked his head.
For once it had shaded the beautiful brow
To which the whole world loved in worship to bow.
To the zone that had girded his waist she gave
The honor due from a faithful slave ;
As a token most dear of her vanished fawn
Round her neck for a snare was the girdle drawn.
With dim eyes weeping, her hands displayed
The glittering folds of his robe of brocade.
She bathed its skirts with her tears, and the gleam
Of the rubies she dropped was on band and seam.
Thus was the grief of Zulaikha renewed
Through the dreary day by each thing she viewed.

As she knew not the value of present joy
 The fierce flame of absence must bliss destroy.
 Zulaikha sorrowed, but sorrowed in vain ;
 Only patience was left her to heal her pain.
 Yes, patience would bring her the balm of rest,
 But how could she banish her love from her breast ?

Death to the lover who weeps alone
 Is the loss of the love he has loved and known.
 Of torments and woe there is none like this —
 To part from one's love after days of bliss.
 If no sweet companionship linked their lives,
 His heart may break, but it still survives.

Zulaikha fain from herself would fly,
 And, of good despairing, would gladly die.
 The wall and the floor with her head she smote,
 The bloodthirsty dagger was raised to her throat.
 She sought, like a watchman, the roof at night
 To cast herself down from the giddy height.
 She twisted a cord of her hair, and strove
 To stifle her breath with the noose she wove.
 She sought release for her weary soul —
 A poisonous draught from life's pleasant bowl.
 She sickened of all, and would fain destroy
 Her life with each thing that was once her joy.

The pitying nurse sought her lady's side,
 Kissed her hands and feet and blessed her and cried :
 “ May thy darling return to dispel thy woe ;
 May thy cup with the wine of his love o'erflow !
 May a happy meeting thy bliss restore,
 With no fear of parting for evermore !

How long shall this folly subdue thee? Arise,
Throw off thy madness, again be wise.
This sad heart bleeds when thy grief I see :
What woman ever has acted like thee?
Patience — list to the voice of age —
Patience alone will thy grief assuage.
Impatience has brought thee this fever of pain :
Let patience allay it with soothing rain.
When o'er thee the whirlwinds of sorrow pass,
Flee not before them like scattered grass.
Keep thy foot in thy skirt with undaunted will,
And stand firm in thy place like a rooted hill.
Patience will lead thee to lasting bliss,
And the fruit of thy longing thou shalt not miss.
Every triumph from patience springs,
The happy herald of better things.
Through patience the pearl from the raindrop grows,
And the diamond shines and the ruby glows ;
The full ear springs from the scattered seed,
And food from the ear for the traveller's need.
So moons come and vanish till babes are born,
And with moonlight beauty the world adorn."

Zulaikha listened, and, half consoled,
The outward signs of her grief controlled.
Rent to the skirt was her robe, but still
She confined her feet with a stronger will.
But if for a moment the lover hears,
The warner speaks to forgetful ears ;
Hushed is that tongue and no traces remain
Of the words of wisdom he spoke in vain.

THE VISIT TO THE PRISON.

When the sun, like Yusuf, afar in the west,
In his gloomy prison had sunk to rest ;
And, like Zulaikha, the mourning skies
Wept for his loss with their starry eyes ;
While the skirt of the heavens was dipped in a flood
Of rose-red hue from its tears of blood ;
Hot tears for Yusuf Zulaikha shed,
And her eyes like the evening horizon were red.
She went to her chamber to sigh and to grieve,
And the wail of the day was renewed at eve.

When the day of a lover is merged in night
Again wakes his pain with redoubled might.
For the loss of his love his lone day is dim :
But the night is yet darker and sadder for him.
Dark is the day when she comes not back,
But the night is darker, deep black upon black
For night to the lover comes heavy with gloom,
And fierce is the offspring that comes from her womb ;
When the terrible child is brought forth it lives
On blood for the milk which a mother gives.
Ah, think what woe must the mother bring
From whom a child thirsting for blood can spring !
In the wild impatience that drove her mad,
The night to Zulaikha was gloomy and sad ;
The darling who ravished her heart was away,
And her night was moonless and sunless her day.
There was splendor of torches, yet dark was each place
Where shone not the light of her loved one's face.

Through the stress of her anguish she closed no eye ;
And she said with hot tears and a bitter cry :
“ How fares he this night ? Ah, how can I tell ?
Who is the bail that they serve him well ?
Who has smoothed the folds at his feet, and set
In order the bolster and coverlet ?
Whose hand has lighted a lamp by his bed,
And softened the pillow to rest his head ?
Who has loosened the zone from his waist, and told,
To lull him, tales of the times of old ?
Has the prison injured his tender frame ?
Like a bird encaged, is the captive tame ?
Have his roses paled in the dungeon air ?
Are his locks still bright as the spikenard’s hair ?
Is the bloom of the rose-garden faded and dead ?
Is the splendor that shone from the spikenard fled ?
In his heart like a rosebud compressed with woes,
Or expanded in joy like the perfect rose ? ”

Thus till a watch of the night was spent
She poured out her anguish in wail and lament.
Then strength departed, endurance died ;
The brook of her patience was empty and dried.
Then the flame of her longing flashed forth : with eyes
Streaming she called to her nurse : “ Arise,
I can wait no longer : arise, let us go
Unseen of all to the house of woe.
There we will hide in some corner ; thus
The Moon of our prison will shine for us.
With the rosy cheek of one’s darling, there
No prison may be, but the spring is fair.

Let others be glad when gay gardens they see :
This bud of the prison is all to me."

In graceful motion away she sped,
And the nurse followed close where the lady led.
She came like a moon to the prison wall,
And the warder rose at her secret call.
He opened the gate as he moved the bar
And showed her the moon of her love afar.
On the carpet of worship his head he bent,
As the sun declines ere the day is spent.
Then he reared like a flambeau his stately height,
And threw o'er the captives long rays of light.
Then he curved his back to a moon whose glow
Fell on the carpet outspread below.
Then, like a rose-twig by the night-wind swayed,
He bowed and to God for forgiveness prayed ;
Then in humble hope with his head depressed
Like a modest violet sat at rest.

Silent and hidden she moved no limb,
Far from herself but so near to him.
But she wept in her heart, and the tears she shed
Turned the jasmine hue of her cheek to red.
With pearl she mangled the ruby, and tore
The rich ripe dates that the palm tree bore.
Then her grief burst forth, and while hot tears ran
From their fountain in torrents, she thus began :
" Eye and lamp of the lovely ones, thou
Whom the fairest would follow with prayer and vow,
In my breast thou hast kindled a flame of fire ;
From my head to my foot I am all desire.

But no drop of pity hast thou bestowed
To quench the flame when its fury glowed.
Thou hast gored my breast and no pity felt
For the cruel wound which thy hand has dealt.
Hast thou no ruth, O most heartless, none
For me rejected, oppressed, undone?
I bear from thee daily fresh grief and scorn :
Ah, woe is me that I ever was born !
Or if she had borne me, a babe unblest,
Would I ne'er had lain on my mother's breast,
Ne'er on kindly milk from her bosom fed,
But deadly poison had sucked instead."

Thus sad Zulaikha wept and complained ;
But cold and unyielding his heart remained.
Unmoved was his soul, or no sign betrayed
That his ruth was stirred as she wept and prayed.

The night passed away : the pure skies o'erhead
Wept tears like those which the holy shed.
Loud sounded the drum from the palace, high
Rose through the air the Muezzin's cry.
The watch-dog's baying was hushed, and round
His throat for a collar his tail was wound.
Up started the cock from his sleep ; his throat
Sent forth to the morning its clarion note.
Then Zulaikha rose ; from the jail she withdrew,
But its threshold she kissed ere she bade it adieu.

Long as her moon in that prison lay,
To its portal nightly she found her way.
Thus ever she went and she came ; and this
Was her heart's sole comfort, her only bliss.

None loves a garden where bright flowers blow
As she loved to visit that house of woe.
Yes, when your love is in prison, where
Will your soul find comfort save only there?

THE PALACE-ROOF.

Night o'er the lover a soft veil throws
To lighten the pang of his bitterest woes,
And brings him many a counsel that lay
Lost in the toil of the bustling day.
As her nightly sorrow grew less and less,
And her anguish lost some of its bitterness,
The day returning her pangs renewed,
And the hundred woes of her solitude.
Her road to the prison by day was barred,
And away from that prison her life was hard.
Some costly trifle each morn she laid
In the willing hand of her trustiest maid,
And instead of herself she commissioned her
To look on the face of the prisoner.
When from her errand the maid returned,
A thousand caresses her task had earned.
On the damsel's foot she would rest her cheek ;
She would kiss her eyes and thus softly speak :
“ Thy foot has been where my darling lies,
And his cheek has been seen by these happy eyes.
No kiss of mine on his eyes may be pressed ;
My cheek on his foot is forbidden to rest.
Yet this eye of thine for a moment — for this

Has looked on the eye of my love — I kiss ;
And I lay my cheek on thy feet instead,
Which have trodden the ground which my darling's
tread."

Then would she question the maiden : " How
Was the glance of his eye ? And his cheek ? And
brow ?

In his daily life is there knot or thorn ?
Is his face untroubled, or pale and worn ?
Has the lonely air of the prison made
His body suffer, his roses fade ?
Did he deign to taste of the dainties I sent ?
Does he think of her whose heart he has rent ?"
She would ask and listen; then swift would she rise
And hasten away with her streaming eyes.

High on her house stood a turret between,
Whose pillars the roof of the prison was seen ;
There, when the hours of the night had flown,
She would close the door fast and would sit alone.
On each cheek was a ruby, a pearl in each eye,
As she gazed on the prison and said with a sigh :
" What am I to behold his dear face ! To see
The roof where he dwells is enough for me.
Unworthy to look on his cheek, mine eye
With those walls and that door will I satisfy.
A Paradise blooms in the dreariest walls
Wherever the light of my dear moon falls.
That roof is blest with a matchless prize,
For the sun of the world in its shelter lies.
My back with a burden of grief is bent

When I think of that wall where his back has leant.
Joy through that portal erect can march,
But my cypress must stoop ere he passed the arch.
Ah, happy threshold ! Ah, blest above
All others to kiss the dear feet of my love !
O joy, when that sun makes me crumble away
Into atoms scarce seen as they float in the ray,
When I leap from my window that sun to meet
And throw myself down at his lovely feet.
Ah, even the earth is more blest than I,
For his graceful feet on her bosom lie,
And the dust of the path which his footsteps stir,
Clings to his skirt and falls sweetly on her."

Through the weary day till the night brought ease
Such was her bondage, her words were like these.
While the light of her heart in that prison lay,
This is the story of night and day.
Still to the prison at night she went,
And by day her eyes on its roof were bent.
Day after day, week after week,
She looked on that wall and she gazed on his cheek.
She had made him a home in her heart : no care
For her life, for the world, could find entrance there.
Lost to herself she thought of him still, -
From her heart's tablet washing all good and ill.
When the call of her maidens rang loud and clear
She scarce came to herself, though she seemed to
hear.
Then to those maidens she oft would say :
" My senses are gone, ah, forever, astray.

Attention from me it is hopeless to seek ;
Touch me and shake me before you speak.
I may come to myself, by your touches stirred ;
Mine ear may be opened, your message heard.
My heart is with him in the prison : hence
Springs all the trouble that steals my sense.
She in whose bosom that fair moon lives,
No care and no thought to another gives."

Fierce fever followed her heart's wild pain,
And the point of the lancet must open a vein.
They who stood round saw each blood-drop spell
A letter of Yusuf's name as it fell.
This word on the ground, so that all might note,
The lancet-reed of the surgeon wrote.
So full of her love were the vein and the skin
That nothing save Yusuf might dwell therein.
Blest is the lover whose soul has fraught
The zephyr of love with no selfish thought ;
Whose heart is so full of its darling, there
No room may be for a single hair ;
Where absolute love through each vein is spread,
In each drop of his blood, in each hair of his head ;
Who forgets his own form and his features, knows
No love of friends and no hatred of foes ;
Who bids farewell to the world, looks down
With scorn on ambition and throne and crown.
If he utters a word 'tis to her that he speaks,
And would win for her only each thing that he seeks.
He recks not of self, and, in all he desires,
His love for his darling each thought inspires.

His former self he has thrown aside,
And each thought is ennobled and purified.

Rise, Jami, thou ! A new life begin ;
Seek the mansion eternal and enter in.
Thou knowest the way which thy feet should tread :
Ne'er the path of the slaggard to bliss hath led.
Quit self and this being forever : set
Thy feet no more in the worldling's net.
Once thou wast not, and no loss was thine :
Now be rich forever, this life resign.
Seek not thy bliss in thyself ; refrain
From the fruitless hope that will bring no gain.

FELLOW-PRISONERS.

He who is born to high fate on earth
Disperses the dark as he springs to birth.
For him in each thicket a lily blows,
And the musk of Tartary breathes from the rose.
He visits the field like a cloud of soft rain,
And Paradise blooms on the thirsty plain.
Like a breeze of spring through a garden he strays,
And the rose awakened her lamp displays.
If his face in a dungeon he deign to show,
Each captive there will forget his woe.

So while the prison where Yusuf lay
Smiled with his presence and all was gay,
Each prisoner, happy in heart, forgot
The bond and the chain and his dreary lot.
But if ever a captive sickened there,

The weary victim of toil and care,
Yusuf watched tenderly o'er him till he
Was made whole from the pain of his malady.
Was the soul of any oppressed with grief
Yusuf was ready to lend relief,
With a smile so sweet and a voice so kind
That the mourner was cheered and his heart resigned.
If a penniless wretch of his lot complained,
As the new moon filled or the full moon waned,¹
Yusuf took from the wealthy a golden key,
Relieved the debtor and made him free.
If a rich man dreamed a sad dream and was caught
In the threatening whirlpool of wildered thought,
The dream was explained by those lips, and he
Was saved from the depth of the surging sea.

Two lords, once high in the ruler's grace,
Had fallen low from their lofty place,
And, doomed in that prison long days to spend,
Had won the love of that faithful friend.
Each dreamed a dream one night, and the breast
Of each was moved with a wild unrest ;
For one had the promise of freedom, one
Was warned that the days of his life were done.
So weighed those dreams, both of hope and dread,
On the heart of each, uninterpreted.
They came to Yusuf and prayed him unfold
The secret drift of the dreams they told.
“Thou on the gallows,” he said, “must swing ;
And thou wilt return to the court of the king.”

¹ As the days came near on which he was bound to pay debts.

True were his words. To the youth restored
 To his place of honor beside his lord,
 Ere he turned to the court from his bonds set free,
 Thus spoke Yusuf: "Remember me.
 If fortune favor thee, time may bring
 A happy hour to address the king.
 Thou wilt gain thy reward if thou speak to him then
 As he sits in the hall with his noblemen.
 'A stranger,' say, 'in the prison lies
 Barred from the sight of thy pitying eyes.
 It beseems not a heart that is righteous like thine
 To suffer the guiltless in bonds to pine.'"

But when that servant his rank regained,
 And the cup of the grace of his master drained,
 For many a year his glad heart forgot
 The prayer of Yusuf or heeded not.
 The tree of his promise brought forth despair,
 And Yusuf yet lingered a captive there.

From him who is chosen, whom God above
 Deems worthy to rest in the shade of His love,
 All earthly means in this world are withdrawn :
 No mortal may hold His elected in pawn.
 God draws him away to Himself alone,
 And to none but Him may his love be shown.
 To the will of another he may not bend,
 But on God alone may his hope depend.
 No prayer to others must he prefer,
 But be God's own servant and prisoner.

THE KING'S VISION.

Many a lock in this world we see
To open whose wards we can find no key,
When the wit of the wise is of no avail,
And care and quick sight and endeavor fail.
On a sudden, touched by no master-hand,
With no device that an artist planned,
Through a cause unknown the lock open flies
And displays to the seeker the long-sought prize.

The heart of Yusuf all hope resigned
That his own device would his bonds unbind.
His hope was only in Him from whom
Comes help to us all in the days of gloom,
And, free from self-thought in his low estate,
He was guided by God the Compassionate.

Clear to the ruler of Egypt's sight
Appeared seven kine, as he dreamed one night ;
Each more fair than the other, all
Were healthy and handsome and fat from the stall.
After them others advancing were seen,
Equal in number, but weak and lean.
By these the former were overpowered
And, like the grass of the field, devoured.
Seven ears of corn then were seen to rise,
That might gladden the heart and delight the eyes.
Then seven thin ears, grown each from a stem,
Followed and withered and ruined them.

In the early morn when the king awoke,
To each wakeful heart of his dream he spoke.

“ We cannot interpret it,” all replied ;
“ Thought and conjecture are here defied.
The dream is a riddle no wit may explain,
And wisest are they who from guess refrain.”
Then he who had knowledge of Yusuf flung
Aside the veil that before him hung,
And said : — “ A youth in the prison lies,
In solving riddles supremely wise.
His wit can interpret each dream, and he
Will bring up the pearl when he dives in the sea.
Permit me to tell him this secret thing,
And the drift of thy dream from his lips will I bring.”
“ What need,” said the king, “ of permission to speak ?
What better than sight may the blind man seek ?
And from this moment the eye of my mind,
Till I master this secret, is dark and blind.”
He ran to the prison with utmost speed,
And gave to Yusuf the dream to read.
“ Years,” he explained, “ are those ears and kine,
Whose looks of those years are the mark and sign.
The fair fat kine and the full ears well
The nature and hope of those years may tell.
The meagre ears, the kine thin and weak,
Of years of dearth and misfortune speak.
In the former seven the kindly rain
Will fill the fields full with rich grass and grain,
And all the land will be glad and gay.
But seven will come, when those pass away,
To ruin the gifts of the years before ;
And the hearts of men will be glad no more.

No gracious cloud the sweet rain will bring,
No blade of grass from the ground will spring.
No joy will the wealth of the rich supply,
And the poor and needy will hunger and die.
On the table of Time is no food, and Bread !
Is the cry of thousands who die unfed."
The noble listened, and straight returned
To the court of the king with the lore he had learned.
To his master the words of Yusuf he told,
And made his glad heart like a bud unfold.
" Bring Yusuf to me," said the monarch, " that I
On the truth of these words may more surely rely.
'Tis sweetest to hear a dear friend repeat
With his own lips the words which, reported, are sweet ;
And who is content from another to hear
The words he may draw from the lips that are dear ? "

Again to the prison his steps he bent,
And gave Yusuf the message the king had sent :
" Fair cypress, come from thy still retreat,
In the monarch's garden to set thy feet.
O come, and the court of his house will shine
More fair with the rose of that cheek of thine."
" Shall I visit," cried Yusuf, " the court of a king
Who has cast me aside like a guilty thing —
Who has left me in prison long years, nor bent
One pitying glance on the innocent ?
Let him first command, if he will that I go
Forth to his court from this house of woe,
That they whom, at sight of me, wonder led
To wound with the knife their own hands till they bled,

Like the Pleiades gathered before his face,
 Uplift the veil and make clear my case ;
 And let them declare for what fault or crime
 I have lain in the prison this dreary time.
 Then will the secret come forth to light,
 And my skirt will be proved to be pure and white.
 The path of sin have I never pursued,
 But traitorous thought in my heart eschewed.
 To my lord I was faithful in deed and in thought,
 No perfidy planned, no dishonesty wrought.
 Ere thus with my master I stooped to deal,
 Like a midnight thief I would plunder and steal."

The message was given ; the monarch heard ;
 To the women of Memphis he sent his word,
 And, called from their homes by the summons, they
 came

To the light of his presence like moths to the flame.
 When their company entered the court of their lord,
 He loosened his tongue as a flaming sword :
 " How did that pure light offend, that you
 The sword of dishonor against him drew ?
 How could you send to a prison the boy
 Whose face was your garden and spring of joy ?
 Bind chains on the neck of an idol for whom
 The weight of a rose were too heavy a doom ?
 No chains but the links of the dew should be borne
 By the rose that is bowed by the breath of the morn."
 " O King," they answered, " whose splendor has lent
 To the crown and the throne a new ornament,
 Purity only in Yusuf we saw,

Honor and love of each holiest law.
No pearl ever lay 'neath the depth of the sea
More pure in the shell that enfolds it than he."

There too Zulaikha sat with the rest,
With no lie on her lip and no guile in her breast.
The schooling of love and his sweet control
Had chastened her spirit and softened her soul.
The splendor of truth from her bosom broke,
And like the true dawning of day she spoke.
The veil of her folly was flung aside,
And, "The light of the truth is revealed," she cried.
"To the charge of Yusuf no sin is laid ;
I in my love for him erred and strayed.
With the spells of my love I would draw him near,
And I drove him afar when he would not hear.
To the house of woe for my woes was he sent,
And my sufferings caused his imprisonment.
When the love-grief I felt was too heavy to bear,
Of the load of my sorrows I gave him a share.
I was the tyrant, and, oh ! that he
Were repaid for the woes he has suffered through
me !

Each grace, each honor and bounty — all
That the king may give — were a gift too small."

He heard Zulaikha the secret disclose ;
He smiled like a rosebud, and bloomed like a rose.
He gave command to his servants to speed,
And back from the prison bring Yusuf freed.
"In the loveliest garden the rose should bloom,
And not lie immured in a dungeon's gloom.

In the realm of love he is lord supreme,
And no seat but a throne may that king beseem."

RELEASE.

In this ancient lodge 'tis a well-known tale
That ne'er without bitter may sweet prevail.
When the weary days of the moons have passed,
The mother looks on her babe at last.
In the rock pines the ruby till, one by one,
Its veins are filled full of the light of the sun.

The night of Yusuf was long and drear,
But it fled at last and the dawn was clear.
Long on his heart lay a mountain of woes,
But bright o'er its summit the sun arose.
To welcome him back with due honor, all
The courtiers who stood in the monarch's hall,
Were straightway commanded to line the way
From the court to the prison in full array.
There youths appareled in rich brocade
And glittering girdles with gold inlaid ;
There skilful riders were fair to see,
On the noblest chargers of Araby ;
There, bright as the sun, was a minstrel throng
Skilled in all Hebrew and Syrian song ;
And the lords of Egypt on every side
Scattered their silver coin far and wide,
While the poor and needy flocked round to gain
A share of the wealth of the shining rain.
Forth from the prison came Yusuf, gay

In the pomp and sheen of a king's array.
The stately steed by his hand controlled
Was a mountain covered with pearl and gold.
Bags full of jewels and coin, and trays
Of musk and ambergris strewed the ways,
Thrown from each side at the feet of his steed,
And from want the poor were forever freed.
He passed through the street of the royal town ;
At the gate of the palace he lighted down,
And silk and satin and gold brocade
Beneath his feet — yea, and heads — were laid,
And o'er azure carpets his steps he bent
Like a moon sailing on through the firmament.

Swift as the wind the glad monarch pressed,
Warned of his coming, to meet the guest.
He clasped him close to his bosom : so
A box tree her arms round a cypress might throw.
He made him sit on his royal seat :
He questioned him long, and his words were sweet.
First the drift of his dream would the monarch hear,
And Yusuf's words made the meaning clear.
Then of many an action and place and thing
He plied him with eagerest questioning.
Each answer of Yusuf was clear and true,
And the king's delight with his wonder grew.
“ Help me with counsel,” at last he said ;
“ This dream which thy lips have interpreted —
How shall I meet the woe threatened ? How drain
The bitter cup of my country's pain ? ”
“ In the years of abundance,” he thus replied,

“ When the clouds the blessing of rain provide,
 Send out thine orders that all shall till
 The fields of the land with one heart and will ;
 With sharp nails harrow each stony place,
 And scatter the seed with the blood of the face.
 Let the grain, which the ears when they ripen, afford
 For the food of the future be gathered and stored.
 In the days of famine each laden ear
 Rends the heart of thy foe with its pointed spear.
 Let the gathered corn in the granaries lie ;
 Then, when the drought and the dearth are nigh,
 From the ample stores thou hast gathered give
 Enough to each man that his soul may live.
 But o'er every business should one preside
 Whose skill and knowledge are proved and tried ;
 Whose keen-eyed prudence each end foresees,
 And his hand performs what his head decrees.
 Search through the world for such heart and brain,
 A man like me will be sought in vain.
 This weighty task to my charge commit,
 For none in the land wilt thou find so fit.”

The king was glad at his sage reply ;
 Mid the lords of Egypt he raised him high.
 He bade the soldiers his word obey
 And gave him the land for his own to sway.
 He was Grand Vizir by the monarch's grace,
 And sat on the throne in the ruler's place.
 Enthroned he sat in his seat of pride,
 And the people bowed prostrate on every side.
 The shouts of the heralds, as forth he went

To the plain, rose up to the firmament.
To every place, as his fancy led,
By thousands his coming was heralded ;
And near their lord, when he chose to ride,
Was a countless army to guard and guide.

When thus to Yusuf the Lord Supreme
Gave the highest rank in the King's esteem,
The Grand Vizir saw his sun go down,
And low sank the flag of his old renown.
Crushed was his heart by his loss of state,
And he fell a prey to the dart of Fate.

* * * * *

THE BLIND WIDOW.

Untouched by delight and by meaner pain
Is the heart that loves fondly but loves in vain.
Only this care to its skirts may cling ;
No joy may gladden, no sorrow sting.
If this world of ours were a sea of woes,
And the billows of wrath high as mountains rose,
They might roar about him and rage, but the hem
Of his garment would never be wetted by them.
If Fate spread a banquet of joy — a feast
Whose delight never ended and still increased —
He would turn away, for the dainties there
Would not lighten his load by a single hair.

A hapless bird was Zulaikha. She pined
In the narrow cage of the world confined.
Befriended by Fortune, in pride and power,

When a rose-bed bloomed in her secret bower ;
With her lord beside her to shade and screen
The tender plant when her bud was green —
With all dainty things, if she cared but to speak ;
When no lamp was so bright as her youthful cheek :
Yusuf e'en then her whole heart possessed —
The sweet name on her lips, the dear hope in her
breast.

Now, when from her side her protector was reft,
When naught of her rank and her treasures was left,
The sole friend of her heart, who ne'er changed his
place,

Was the sweet remembrance of Yusuf's face.
She thought of him ever ; her sad house seemed
Her dear fatherland when of him she dreamed.

No food could she eat, and she closed not her eyes ;
She wept tears of blood and she said with sighs :—
“ Beloved Yusuf, where, where art thou ?

Why false and faithless to pledge and vow ?

Oh, that again those sweet hours I might see,
When one happy home held my love and me !

When no fear of parting could mar delight,
And I gazed on his beauty from morn till night.
When stern Fate robbed me of this sweet joy,
I sent to prison that innocent boy.

Unseen by night to his presence I stole,
And the sight of his cheek was as balm to my soul :
And a glance at the walls where my darling lay
Rubbed the rust of grief from my heart by day.
No joy is now left me, no solace like these ;

My heart and my frame perish of pain and disease.
All I have left is the image which still,
Where'er I may be, this sad bosom must fill.
The soul of this frame is that image, and I,
Bereft of its presence, should languish and die."

Then her breast and her heart she would fiercely
tear,
And engrave the form of her darling there.
She would strike her soft knee with her hand till the
blue
Of the lotus supplanted the jasmine's hue.
"I am worthy the love of my love," she would cry,
"For my love is the sun and the lotus am I.
As my love is the lord of the east and the west,
The place of the lotus for me is the best."

She would strike her heart's fir-cone¹ again and again
With closed fingers knotted like sugar-cane.
And her hand — no picture could match its grace —
Left on her bosom a blood-red trace.
For a reed each bleeding finger she took,
And, white as pure camphor, her hand was a book ;
But the only word she could write therein
Was the syllable grief on the silver skin ;
And ah, her beloved would read or note
No single line of the word she wrote.

Long years of sorrow, each like the last,
In hopeless yearning alone she passed.
White, white as milk grew each plaited tress,

¹ The heart, from its shape, is frequently by Persian poets likened to a fir-cone.

And dark was the light of her loveliness.
The musk had departed, the camphor was there,
And the gray dawn had banished the night of her hair.
From the arrow of Fate had the raven fled,
And the owlet lodged in the nest instead ;
Lives any so old who can call to mind
Owls keeping a nest by the ravens resigned ?
In her eye's narcissus the jasmine grew :
Tears had washed from her eyelid its jetty hue.
Black in the days of her joy was that eye
Which looked delighted on earth and sky.
Why, when her hope and her heart had failed,
And her joy passed away, was the blackness paled ?
From Hindustan had she learned to wear
Nothing but white in her woe and despair ?
With wrinkles the bloom of her cheek was marred,
And the leaves of the wild rose were withered and
scarred ;
Each line that in blandishment once lent a grace
To her delicate brow now disfigured her face.
In this ancient world who ever has known
The smooth water lined when no breeze has blown ?
But there ever were wrinkles and lines to deform
Her face's soft splendor in calm or in storm.
Grief had bent down the cypress once stately and
proud,
And her head like a ring to her foot was bowed —
Weighed down by its burden it lay on her feet,
Like a ring on the door where the happy ones meet.
When no longer the blessing of sight remained

On this earth with the blood of the dead distained,
She bowed down her back and she bent her head
As if seeking the treasure which long had fled.
Slowly and sadly the years came round :
Her foot was unringed and her head uncrowned.
There gleamed on her shoulder no satin's sheen,
No precious gems in her ears were seen.
On her neck was no collar of costly stone ;
No gold-wrought veil o'er her cheek was thrown.
On the cold bare earth for a bed she lay,
And the cheek once so dainty was pillow'd on clay.
Ah, earth, with his love, was a pleasanter bed
Than a silken couch by a Houri spread !
Yes, a jewelled pillow from Paradise seemed
The brick on her cheek when of him she dreamed.

In this sorrow, of which but a part is sung
In the vocal pearls which my pen has strung,
His name was all that her lips could speak,
The only comfort her soul might seek.
While yet she had treasures, a wealth untold
Of jewels and silver, of pearl and gold,
Her gold and silver she cast at the feet
Of her whom some tale of her love would repeat,
And her pearls and her jewels she gave to each
Who poured forth those jewels and pearls of speech ;
But her gold and silver, her pearls, and her vast
Treasure of jewels were spent at last.
With a woollen gown and a girdle rent
From the bark of the palm she was then content.
Then all on the knee of deep silence fell :

No more of Yusuf she heard them tell.
 No longer came the sweet tidings to cheer
 Her lonely heart through the path of her ear.

That this food of her life might be still supplied
 She built her a hut by the highway side,
 That each ear might catch — and the hope was
 sweet —

The measured tread of his escort's feet.
 Ah, poor, unhappy, deserted soul,
 From whose hand has fallen the rein of control !
 From the love of her darling by Fate debarred,
 The voice of her longing was tuneless and hard.
 No breath from her love might be wafted to her,
 No tidings be learned from a messenger.
 Oft would she question the wind if it knew
 Aught of her love, and the bird as it flew.
 Whenever a traveller passed the place
 With the dust of the road on his weary face,
 She would wash that brow, she would bathe those feet
 For they came from his home to her lone retreat.
 If her lord and king by her cottage passed,
 No look on his face had she power to cast,
 Content with the sound of his horse's tread,
 And the dust of his path on her happy head.

THE COTTAGE OF REEDS.

A cottage of reeds had she built by the side
 Of the way where Yusuf was wont to ride ;
 And with reeds that uttered a plaintive sound

Like the voice of a flute, she had fenced it round.
Whenever she uttered her wail and cry,
Each reed in concert gave sigh for sigh.
When the fire of absence consumed her, the seeds
Of the wild flame fell on the pitying reeds.
Heartbroken she dwelt in that hut, nor stirred
From the place where she lay like a wounded bird.
Yet the thought of her love was so sweet a pain
That each reed was to her like a sugar-cane.

In his stalls had Yusuf a fairy steed,
A courser through space of no earthly breed;
Swift as the heavens, and black and white
With a thousand patches of day and night ;
Now a jetty spot, now a starry blaze,
Like Time with succession of nights and days.
With his tail the heavenly Virgo's hair,
With his hoof the moon, was afraid to compare.
Each foot with a golden new moon was shod,
And the stars of its nails struck the earth as he trod.
When his hoof smote sharp on the rugged flint
A planet flashed forth from the new moon's dint ;
And a new moon rose in the sky when a shoe
From the galloping foot of the courser flew.
Like an arrow shot through its side in the chase,
He outstripped the game in the deadly race.
At a single bound he would spring, unpressed,
With the lightning's speed from the east to the west.
As he lifted the dust with his foot, the wind
Of the rushing tempest was left behind.
If the road he traversed was dank and wet,

On his coat you would see not a drop of sweat,
 But oft would his paces be gentle and slow,
 As the big drops combine till the torrents flow.
 Now, a flying treasure, away would he dash
 O'er the plain, untouched by the snake¹ of the lash.
 Had he loved to rest in his quiet stall,
 The heavens had served him, a careful thrall ;
 Had quenched his thirst from the fount of the sun,
 With the urn of the moon, when his course was run.
 They had fed him with Virgo's gold barley, and hay
 Gleaned from the field of the Milky Way.²
 A sieve for his use they had bidden prepare,
 Each year and month, of a comet's hair ;
 And the birds who sing praise at the break of morn
 From the Lote tree³ had flocked to pick stones from
 his corn.

On his back for a saddle the Scales had been flung,
 And a new moon each side for his stirrup hung.
 When Yusuf mounted, the moon bestrode
 The Scales his saddle and forth he rode.
 At the touch of that thigh the proud courser neighed,
 And his thoughts no more from the journey strayed.
 The neigh of the charger rang clear and loud,
 And the drum of departure was shouts from the crowd ;
 And like planets grouped round the moon a ring
 Of courtiers gathered about their king.

From her cottage of reeds came Zulaikha out

¹ An allusion to the serpent which is said to guard hidden treasure.

² Kakhshan, its Persian name, means literally " Hay-Attractor."

³ The Sidrah or Lote tree in Paradise.

When she knew of his coming and heard them shout.

In grief and anguish of heart by the side

Of the road he would travel she sat and cried.

When the host that preceded his courser was near

Loud rang the voices of boys with a cheer :

“Look, Yusuf himself, whom the sun in the sky

And the bright moon envy, is nigh, is nigh.”

Zulaikha answered : “Mine eyes are blind,

But no trace of Yusuf mid these I find.

Mock me not, darlings ! oh, spare me the pain,

No breath from Yusuf has reached my brain.

The musk of Tartary scents the place

That is blest with the light of his lovely face,

And when he sits in his litter, thence

A precious perfume pervades the sense.”

Nearer and nearer, mid loud acclaim,

Of hearts that were jubilant, Yusuf came.

They called to Zulaikha : — “The guards are nigh,

But no trace of Yusuf has met our eye.”

“Strive not to deceive me,” Zulaikha replied ;

“My darling’s coming ye may not hide.

Can the coming of one who was born to wield

The sceptre of sway o’er each soul be concealed ?

The breath of his fragrance gives life to the whole

Of this world of ours and each single soul ;

And the presence of him who gives life is made known

To the poor thirsty soul that must perish alone.”

When Zulaikha, long buried in darkness and gloom,

Heard the shout of the escort, “Make room, make

room !”

A loud cry she uttered : “Rejected, forlorn,
 A long age of absence my spirit has borne.
 I can suffer no more : I have had my full share :
 Loss of patience is now the sole loss I may bear.
 Far better, forever excluded from bliss,
 To fly from myself than to linger like this.”

Thus cried Zulaikha, then sank and lay
 Unconscious awhile, all her senses astray.
 That cup of unconsciousness still she kept,
 As, oblivious of self, to her cottage she crept.
 Then rose the shrill wail as her sad heart bled,
 And reeds sighed in tune with the strain she led.
 Thus passed in her sorrow the time away,
 And this was the task of each mournful day.

THE CONVERT.

Never content is the lover ; each hour
 His longing waxes in strength and power.
 Ne'er to one wish for two moments true,
 A joy still dearer he holds in view.
 He would look on the rose when he breathes her
 scent,
 And pluck the fair flower when the stem is bent.
 Zulaikha had sat by the way, but now
 She would lift her eyes to his cheek and brow.
 At the foot of the image to which she prayed
 From the days of childhood her head she laid :
 “O thou, to whom praying I turn me, before
 Whose feet I have loved thy dear might to adore ;

I have served thee devoutly from youth's early day ;
But the gem of my sight has been taken away.
Cast a pitying look on my ruin ; restore
The light of mine eyes that I sorrow no more.
Between Yusuf and me must there still be a bar ?
Oh, let me but see him — one look from afar.
This prayer — thou art mighty ; this one wish fulfil ;
Give this, and then deal with me after thy will.
What is life to a wretch who must hopelessly pine ?
Far better were death than a life like mine.”
Thus cried Zulaikha. She laid down her head,
And wet was the ground with the tears she shed.

To his throne in the east rose the Lord of Day,
And the steed of Yusuf was heard to neigh.
She came from her cottage in beggar's weed
To the narrowest turn in the way of the steed,
With raised hand acted the mendicant's part,
And made a low moan from the ground of her heart.
Before their master, the horsemen's cry,
“ Make room, make room ! ” went up to the sky ;
And the tread and tramp of the mighty throng,
And the neighing of steeds as they moved along,
Smote on each ear, and no eye was turned
To the spot where Zulaikha sat undiscerned.
He looked not on her ; she rose forlorn,
In a hundred pieces her heart was torn.
Her broken spirit sent out a cry,
And a flame came forth in each burning sigh.
To her house of woe she returned distraught,
And a hundred flames for each reed she brought.

She placed before her the idol of stone,
 And to lighten her sorrow thus made her moan :
 “ O thou who hast broken mine honor’s urn,
 Thou stone of offence wheresoever I turn,
 I should smite — for thy falsehood has ruined my rest —
 With the stone thou art made of, the heart in my breast.
 The way of misfortune too surely I trod
 When I bowed down before thee and made thee my
 god ;
 When I looked up to thee with wet eyes in my woe,
 I renounced all the bliss which both worlds can bestow.
 From thy stony dominion my soul will I free,
 And thus shatter the gem of thy power and thee.”

With a hard flint stone, like the Friend,¹ as she
 spoke,
 In a thousand pieces the image she broke.
 Riven and shattered the idol fell,
 And with her from that moment shall all be well.
 She made her ablution, mid penitent sighs,
 With the blood of her heart and the tears of her eyes.
 She bent down her head to the dust ; with a moan
 She made supplication to God’s pure throne : —
 “ O God, who lovest the humble, Thou
 To whom idols, their makers, their servants bow ;
 ’Tis to the light which Thy splendor lends
 To the idol’s face that its worshipper bends.
 Thy love the heart of the sculptor stirs,
 And the idol is graven for worshippers.

¹ Abraham, the Friend of God, broke the images which his father and his people worshipped.

They bow them down to the image, and think
That they worship Thee as before it they sink.
To myself, O Lord, I have done this wrong,
If mine eyes to an idol have turned so long.
I have erred and strayed ; let repentance win
Forgiveness, Good Lord, for my grievous sin.
Because I have wandered, nor heeded Thy right,
From mine eyes Thou hast taken the jewel of sight.
Thou hast washed the dark stain of my sin away :
Now restore the lost blessing for which I pray.
May I feel my heart free from the brand of its woes,
And cull from the garden of Yusuf a rose.”

As Yusuf home to his palace hied,
Again by the way stood Zulaikha and cried :
“ Glory to God ! to a monarch’s state
He has lifted the poor and cast down the great.
He has cast the king from his glory down,
And set on the head of a servant his crown.”

When Yusuf the voice of Zulaikha heard,
His heart in his bosom was strangely stirred.
He cried to a lord : “ As I hear her speak
My spirit sinks and my heart grows weak.
Who is the beadswoman ? Bid her appear
In my council-chamber that I may hear
From her lips the tale of her life, and know
Her share of fortune, her dole of woe.
For the words of praise which mine ears have caught
On my troubled spirit have strongly wrought.
By some grievous woe is her heart down-weighed.
Or why should my soul be so touched and swayed ? ”

Two hundred souls, to the king who can note
 The truth of each sigh and each glance, I devote ;
 Whose eye can discern the light of the true
 From the false look of those who deceive when they sue ;
 Who honor and punishment justly can mete
 To the true light of dawn and the liar's deceit ;
 Not like the princes whose judgment, for gold,
 In our evil days may be bought and sold.
 Each tyrant with cheeks like a guinea in hue
 Makes a hundred wretches his mystery rue.
 Gold brings the flush of delight to the cheek ;
 But justice from gold it were idle to seek.

YOUTH RESTORED.

For what sweeter joy can a lover yearn
 Than to love his love and be loved in return ;
 To bear to her bower his burden of woes,
 And find the sweet comfort which love bestows ;
 To tell the dear hopes of his heart and repeat
 The tales of old time at his darling's feet?

When Yusuf, freed from the pomp and din,
 Had sought his chamber and entered in,
 A chamberlain cried at the door : " O best
 Of princes, famous from east to west,
 That ancient woman in beggar's weed,
 Who laid her hand on the rein of thy steed,
 Whom by thine order I bade appear
 This day in thy presence, is waiting here."
 " Go, hear her petition," thus Yusuf replied,

" Is she poor and in want, for her need provide."

" She is not," said the chamberlain, " one of those
Who will tell me the tale of her need and woes."

" Admit her," said Yusuf, " that, face to face,
She may lift the veil of her mournful case."

Zulaikha came in, when permission was won,
As free as the motes in the light of the sun.
Like a bud she expanded: the lips that were pale
Smiled bright as a rose, and she bade him hail.
He asked her her name and her home, the while
He marvelled much at that joyous smile.

" I am she who chose thee," she cried; " and thou,
Since that one first glance, hast been loved till now;
To whom, bought with my wealth, I devoted the
whole

True love of my heart and my mind and my soul.
I cast for thy sake my young life to the wind,
And age has come o'er me and youth declined.
Thine arms for a consort this realm have embraced,
And I am unpitied, forgotten, disgraced."

From his eye the big tears of compassion fell
As he heard the tale he remembered so well.
" Zulaikha," he said, " what unhappy fate
Has brought thee down to thy low estate?"

When she heard her beloved her name express,
Zulaikha fell prostrate, Zulaikhaless.
The wine of unconsciousness boiled in her heart,
And the sense from her body was riven apart.
Then thus began Yusuf, as slowly at length
Zulaikha recovered her senses and strength:

“Where is thy youth, and thy beauty, and pride?”
 “Gone, since I parted from thee,” she replied.
 “Where is the light of thine eye?” said he,
 “Drowned in blood-tears for the loss of thee.”
 “Why is that cypress tree bowed and bent?”
 “By absence from thee and my long lament.”
 “Where is thy pearl, and thy silver and gold,
 And the diadem bright on thy head of old?”
 “She who spoke of my loved one,” she answered,
 “shed,

In the praise of thy beauty, rare pearls on my head.
 In return for those jewels, a recompense meet,
 I scattered my jewels and gold at her feet.
 A crown of pure gold on her forehead I set,
 And the dust that she trod was my coronet.
 The stream of my treasure of gold ran dry ;
 My heart is love’s storehouse, and I am I.”

Again spoke Yusuf : “Zulaikha, say,
 What is the wish of thy heart to-day?”
 “My prayer,” she answered, “wilt thou refuse ;
 But no help save thine can I wish or choose.
 And if with an oath thou wilt pledge thy word,
 To utter that prayer shall my tongue be stirred.
 If not, in silence my lips I close,
 And give my soul back to my life of woes.”

“By the truth of that Father¹ who reared of yore
 The temple of prophecy,” thus he swore ;
 “To whom a tulip bloomed forth in the flame,
 And from heaven a robe of high honor came ;

¹ Abraham.

Whatever thy will be this day, I vow—
If I have but the power—I will grant it now."

"First, my beauty," she cried, "and my youth re-store

In the pride and splendor thou knewest before ;
Then add the gift of new sight to those,
To see thee and cull from thy cheek a rose."

He moved his lips and his prayer began
While the healing stream from his pure mouth ran.
The beauty returned which was ruined and dead,
And her cheek gained the splendor which long had fled.

Again shone the waters¹ which sad years had dried,
And the rose-bed of youth bloomed again in its pride.
The musk was restored and the camphor withdrawn,
And the black night followed the gray of the dawn.
The cypress rose stately and tall as of old :
The pure silver was free from all wrinkle and fold.
From each musky tress fled the traces of white :
To the black narcissus came beauty and light.
The halo of youth round her age was seen :
For the forty-years' dame stood a girl of eighteen ;
Yes, fairer and brighter in loveliness stood
Than in days of her ripening maidenhood,

Again said Yusuf : "O thou most fair,
If a wish now be left thee, that wish declare."

"The one sole wish of my heart," she replied,
"Is still to be near thee, to sit by thy side ;

¹ *Ab*, in Persian, means both water and splendor.

To have thee by day in my happy sight,
And to lay my cheek on thy foot at night ;
To lie in the shade of the cypress and sip
The sugar that lies on thy ruby lip ;
To my wounded heart this soft balm to lay :
For naught beyond this can I wish or pray.
The streams of thy love will new life bestow
On the dry thirsty field where its sweet waters flow.”

When Yusuf the prayer of Zulaikha had heard,
He bowed down his head and he spoke no word,
To the world unseen were his eyes turned away,
And he gave her no answer of Yea or Nay.
Then a sound on his ear, as he doubted, fell,
And he knew 'twas the wing-beat of Gabriel.
Thus spoke the Angel : “ To thee, O king,
From the Lord Almighty a message I bring.
‘ Mine eyes have seen her in humble mood ;
I heard her prayer when to thee she sued.
At the sight of her labors, her prayers, and sighs,
The waves of the sea of My pity rise.
Her soul from the sword of despair I free,
And here from My throne I betroth her to thee.’ ”

NOTES.

ODE I.

1. A black mole is to the Persians a great mark of beauty.
3. The Luli or gypsies, as they were contemptuously called, were a people of the tribe of Keredj, of Indian origin, who inhabited the country between Shiraz and Isfahan. Their young men and maidens were famous for their beauty and musical accomplishments.
6. Joseph's separation from his father stands for the parting of lovers.

ODE II.

4. The glass of Alexander, sometimes a mirror, sometimes a bowl, is identical with the cup of jam, or jamshid, which plays so large a part in Persian imagery. This magic glass reflected in its surface all that was passing on the earth; by its aid Alexander was able to foresee all the movements of Darius, and so to conquer him. Allegorically the glass of Alexander, or bowl of jamshid, means the intuition into the truth of the universe gained by union with the Godhead through the ecstasy of intoxication, literal or mystical.

7. The morning draught, the cure for "hot coppers," is the sign of an abandoned toper. The bulbul sings all night through to keep the frequenters of the tavern awake in readiness to drink at dawn.

9. It was Mohammed himself who called the wine the "dam of abominations." The saying is here attributed to the anonymous "Sufi" only from obvious motives of piety—or policy.

10. Kurun, the Korah of the Bible, is the Mohammedan Croesus. The Koran says that the keys alone of his treasure-houses made burdens for several men.

11. Hafiz has been appointed from the creation of the world to be a wine-drinker, and this must be his excuse before orthodox teachers for whom abstinence has been foreordained.

ODE III.

4. Here the Hostel of Two Doors is life, with its gates of birth and death. Khayyam's thought, rendered by Fitzgerald, is, "this battered Caravanserai, whose portals are alternate Night and Day."

5. The "vow of Alast" is the eternal compact which binds man to obedience to his Maker; and the day of Alast is the day of creation.

7. Solomon was blessed with three privileges among others: he could ride on the wind, he knew the language of birds, and he had for his Grand Vizir the sage Asaph, Asaph of the psalms, famous for his wise conduct of the kingdom through the troublous time when Solomon's seal, to which he owed his superhuman powers, was in the possession of Sakler the Genie, who had stolen it, through the carelessness of Asaph himself.

ODE IV.

5. The Mohammedans say that Abraham's father was named Azar, which in Persian means "fire," and that he was a maker of idols, and hence idolatry and fire-worship were the prevalent religions of that time. Nimrod, the king of the day, caused Abraham to be cast into a great fire which was miraculously turned into a rose garden. Hence the fire of Nimrod which enflames the tulip.

ODE VI.

This ode, so Anacreontic in form and spirit, was written on the occasion of one of the periodical edicts which enforced the laws against wine-drinking.

ODE VII.

8. The "Angel Guard" is the mythical Khizr, the "Green Old Man." See note XXIX.

ODE VIII.

Hafiz wrote this ode during his visit at Yezd on the Sultan's invitation. This is said to be his only long journey away from Shiraz. Besides homesickness he suffered from niggardly treatment.

3. The Protector is Khizr, the Angel Guard of VII.

7. This couplet illustrates a curious conceit, much used in Persian poetry — the introduction of the elements in rhetorical relation. Three out of the four are brought in here, air, water, and earth; and the lines thus possess an elegance which the uninstructed Occidental would never suspect.

9. Zuhra is the planet Venus, the Anahita or Uahid of the old Persian mythology, and the lute-player of the heavens.

ODE XXIV.

3. The Persians describe the dimple in the chin of their mistress as a dangerous well filled with her lover's tears, into which, when he approaches her mouth, he may fall and be drowned.

6. "Oh rose, tearing thy robe in two": that is, bursting into flower beneath the warm breath of the wind that blows from where thou art.

ODE XXV.

1. This poem is addressed to the Vizir of Sultan Oweis of Bagh-dad, Hadji Kawameddin, who founded a college for Hafiz in Shiraz. With true Persian exaggeration the poet must needs write to his patron much in the same terms in which a lover would write to his mistress; but his words, though they sound strangely to our ears, are nothing more than the Oriental way of saying, "Awake, my St. John!"

The mystical interpretation of the first few lines is said to be: As the wine glows in the cup like the reflection of a ruddy cheek, so in the goblet of my heart I have seen the reflection of God, the true Beloved.

6. It is related that upon a certain occasion, when Hafiz was feasting with the Vizir in the latter's garden, a servant handed to him a goblet of wine, and as he took it he saw in it the reflection of the crescent moon overhead. The incident suggested this verse to him. I should say that the anecdote was of doubtful authenticity.

ODE XXVI.

1. Hafiz wrote this poem upon the death of his son.

3. Rosenzweig, in his edition of the *Divan*, says that the allusion is to the dust and water which God kneaded into the body of Adam, and that, out of derision, Hafiz calls the human body a house of joy.

The moon, according to Persian superstition, has a baneful influence upon human life.

4. Rosenzweig says that "I had not castled" means that Hafiz had not taken the precaution of marrying his son, and so securing for himself grandchildren who would have been a consolation to him on their father's death. For that reason he had nothing more to lose, and was indifferent as to what his next move in the game should be.

ODE XXVII.

3. "Night is with child"—a Persian proverb extraordinarily suggestive of the clear, deep, Eastern sky. The sight seems to slip through between the stars and penetrate a darkness which is big with possibilities.

ODE XXVIII.

Sidrah and Tuba are two trees in the Garden of Paradise. The former is the abode of the angel Gabriel. Concerning the latter Sale says: "They fable that it stands in the palace of Mohammed, though a branch of it will reach to the house of every true believer; that it will be laden with pomegranates, grapes, dates, and other fruits of surprising bigness, and of tastes unknown to mortals. So that if a man desire to eat of any particular kind of fruit, it will immediately be presented to him; or if he choose flesh, birds ready dressed will be set before him, according to his wish. They add that the boughs of this tree will spontaneously bend down to the hand of the person who would gather of its fruits, and that it will supply the blessed not only with food, but also with silken garments and beasts to ride on, ready saddled and bridled and adorned with rich trappings, which will burst forth from its fruits; and that this tree is so large that a person mounted on the fleetest horse would not be able to gallop from one end of its shade to the other in a hundred years."—*Introduction to the Koran*.

4. He means either *facilis decensus Averni*, or, more probably, that a great number of those upon whom the orthodox look askance will be found to have equal claim to reward, since the distinction between Sufi and orthodox is in fact nothing.

ODE XXIX.

1. Blue is the Persian color of mourning. Hafiz compares the weeping lovers, clad in robes of grief, to a bed of violets, and as

the violets bow their heads when the wind passes over them, so they bow down when their mistress passes by with flowing curls.

3. "Erghwan," the *Syringa persica* or Persian lilac. In the early spring, before it comes into leaf, it is covered with buds of a beautiful reddish purple color.

"Khizr," a prophet whom the Mohammedans confound with Phineas, Elias, and St. George, saying that his soul passed by metapsychosis successively through all three. He discovered the fountain of life and drank of it, thereby making himself immortal. It is said that he guided Alexander to the same fountain, which lay in the Land of Darkness. It was he, too, for whom Moses set out to seek when he had been informed by God that Al Khizr was wiser than he. He found him seated on a rock, at the meeting of the two seas, and followed him for a time, learning wisdom from him, as is related in the eighteenth chapter of the Koran. His name signifies Green; wherever his feet rested, the earth was covered with green herbs, and it was he from whom Hafiz took the cup of immortality.

ODE XXX.

2. That is to say, the prayer-carpet of the orthodox Mussulman had not enough value to procure for him so much as one glass of Sufi wine. Nor was he worthy to lay his head even upon the dusty steps of the tavern — the place of instruction in Sufi doctrine.

3. To be clothed in one color is the Persian idiom for sincerity. He means that the single purple robe of the grape is worth more than the hypocritical garment of the dervish, all torn and patched with long journeying — in the wrong road.

ODE XXXII.

5. Shah Shudja was not always on the best of terms with Hafiz, partly because he was jealous of the latter's fame as a poet, and partly because Hafiz had been the protégé of Shah Shudja's former rival, Abu Ishac. Accordingly the king looked about for some means of doing the poet an injury, nor was it long before he found what he sought. He accused Hafiz of denying the resurrection, basing the accusation upon the last couplet of this poem — the last three lines of the present translation — and cited him before the Ulema as an infidel. But Hafiz was too many for him. Before the day on which he was to answer the charge against himself, he inserted another couplet into the ode, in which he stated that the dangerous lines did not express his own opinion, but that of a

heretical Christian. He came off with flying colors; for not only was he entirely cleared, but it was also acknowledged that he had dealt a good blow on behalf of the Mohammedan religion, since he had shown up one of the errors of the infidel.

ODE XXXIV.

3. The month of Sha'aban is the eighth month of the Arabic year. It is followed by Ramazan, during which month the Prophet decreed that from two hours before dawn until sunset nothing should pass the lips of his followers. The fast is so strictly observed, especially by the lower orders, that not only do they refrain from eating and drinking, but they will not even smoke until the sunset gun puts an end to the day's abstinence. The night, however, is passed in feasting and revelry, and the richer classes will sleep late in Ramazan and shorten the long hours that must pass before they may breakfast.

ODE XXXV.

i. The story of the creation of Adam, and of the part played in it by the angels, is told by Mohammed in the following terms: "When thy Lord said unto the angels, I am going to place a substitute on earth; they said, Wilt thou place there one who will do evil therein, and shed blood? but we celebrate thy praise and sanctify thee. God answered, Verily I know that which ye know not; and he taught Adam the names of all things, and then proposed them to the angels, and said, Declare unto me the names of these things if ye say truth. They answered, Praise be unto thee, we have no knowledge but what thou teachest us, for thou art knowing and wise. God said, O Adam, tell them their names. And when he had told them their names, God said, Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and know that which ye discover and that which ye conceal? And when he said unto the angels, Worship Adam; they all worshipped him, except Eblis, who refused, and was puffed up with pride, and became of the number of unbelievers." — *Koran*, chap. ii.

Tradition has amplified and adorned this story. It is said that the three archangels, Gabriel, Michael, and Israfil, were each in turn ordered to take from the earth seven handfuls of clay of three different colors, red, white, and yellow, that God might create out of it the races of mankind. But each in turn was moved by the earth's prayer that he would not rob her of her substance, and each returned to heaven empty-handed. The fourth time God sent

Azrail, the angel of death, who tore the seven handfuls from the earth, but hearing her lamentations, promised her that when man ceased to live his substance should return to the earth from whence it had been taken. With the clay that Azrail brought him God moulded the figure of man, and when it was finished he left it forty days to dry. The angels came often to gaze upon it, and Eblis, kicking it with his foot, found that it rang hollow. When the figure of clay was dry, God breathed the breath of life into its nostrils, and ordered the angels to submit to the man he had created. But Eblis refused, saying that he had been created of pure fire, and would not serve a hollow mould of clay; for which reason God cast him out of Paradise. The rest of the angels acknowledged the superiority of Adam after God had made him tell them the names of all the creatures of the earth, though they had at first protested that it was not seemly that they should bow down to him, for their love for God was greater than his. It is with this legend in his mind that Hafiz speaks of the angels as standing at the tavern door, where man may enter and receive instruction in God's wisdom, but where they must knock in vain, and as moulding a wine-cup with the despised clay out of which the human body was moulded. I think he means that man himself is the vessel into which divine love and wisdom are poured; and when he says that the angels first brought him wine, he means that by their example they showed him what it was to be intoxicated by the contemplation of God.

3. "Concerning the forbidden fruit," says Sale in a note to the second chapter of the Koran, "the Mohammedans, as well as the Christians, have different opinions. Some say it was an ear of wheat, some will have it to have been a fig tree, and others a vine."

There are supposed to be seventy-two sects in Islam. Many Mohammedan writers compare them to the seventy-two branches of the family of Noah after the Babylonian confusion of tongues and the dispersal of the children of Adam.

ODE XXXVII.

1. It is related that Ghiyasuddin Purabi, who succeeded his father to the throne of Bengal in the year 1367, fell sick. During his illness he was nursed by three faithful handmaidens whose names were Cypress, Tulip, and Rose, and owing to their care he eventually recovered. The rest of the Sultan's ladies were jealous of the gratitude that the three maidens had earned from Ghiyasuddin, and nicknamed them contemptuously "the three bath women," because they had washed the king's body while he was ill. He

therefore determined to do them honor by commemorating their devotion in a poem, and to this end he composed the first line of a couplet, and ordered the poets of his court to complete the ode. The line ran thus: "Sàki hadis-i-sarvo gul o lâleh miravad"—Cup-bearer, a tale runs of a Cypress, a Rose, and a Tulip. But the poets were unable to perform the task to the king's satisfaction, and at length some one suggested that the line should be sent to Hafiz of Shiraz, the fame of whose great skill had reached Bengal. This was accordingly done, and Hafiz composed the ode here translated, with which the Sultan (whose taste seems to have turned toward the discursive in poetry) was much delighted. The three cups of wine are an allusion to the three maidens who washed the king's body; the parrots of India are the court poets of Ghiyasuddin, and the Persian sweetmeat is the ode that Hafiz sent to Bengal.

4. Samir. Al Samiri belonged, say the Mohammedans, to a certain tribe among the Jews called the Samaritans, whence his name. In this the Mohammedans strangely betray their ignorance of history, for the Samaritans were not formed into a people, nor did they bear that name, until many ages later. Some say that he was a proselyte, but a hypocritical one, and originally of Kerman or some other country. His real name was Musa ibn Dhafar. He was a magician and an alchemist. Pharaoh employed him as a rival to Moses when the latter worked miracles with his hand and his staff, but Al Samiri was unable to show wonders as great as those performed by Moses. It was he and not Aaron, according to Mohammedan tradition, who cast the golden calf. The calf was made of the ornaments of gold and silver and other materials which the Israelites had borrowed from the Egyptians; for Aaron, who commanded in his brother's absence, having ordered Al Samiri to collect those ornaments from the people, who carried on a wicked commerce with them, and to keep them together till the return of Moses, Al Samiri, understanding the founder's art, put them all together into a furnace, to melt them down into one mass, which came out in the form of a calf. The Israelites, accustomed to the Egyptian idolatry, paying a religious worship to this image, Al Samiri went further, and took some dust from the footsteps of the horse of the angel Gabriel, who marched at the head of the people, and threw it into the mouth of the calf, which immediately began to low, and became animated; for such was the virtue of that dust. (Sale, Notes to second and twenty-second chapters of the Koran.) Al Samiri is mentioned by name in the twenty-second chapter of the Koran : "Al Samiri led them astray."



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